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The Editors
HOPE IS A SURVIVOR

John Garvey
ASYLUMS OF SANITY

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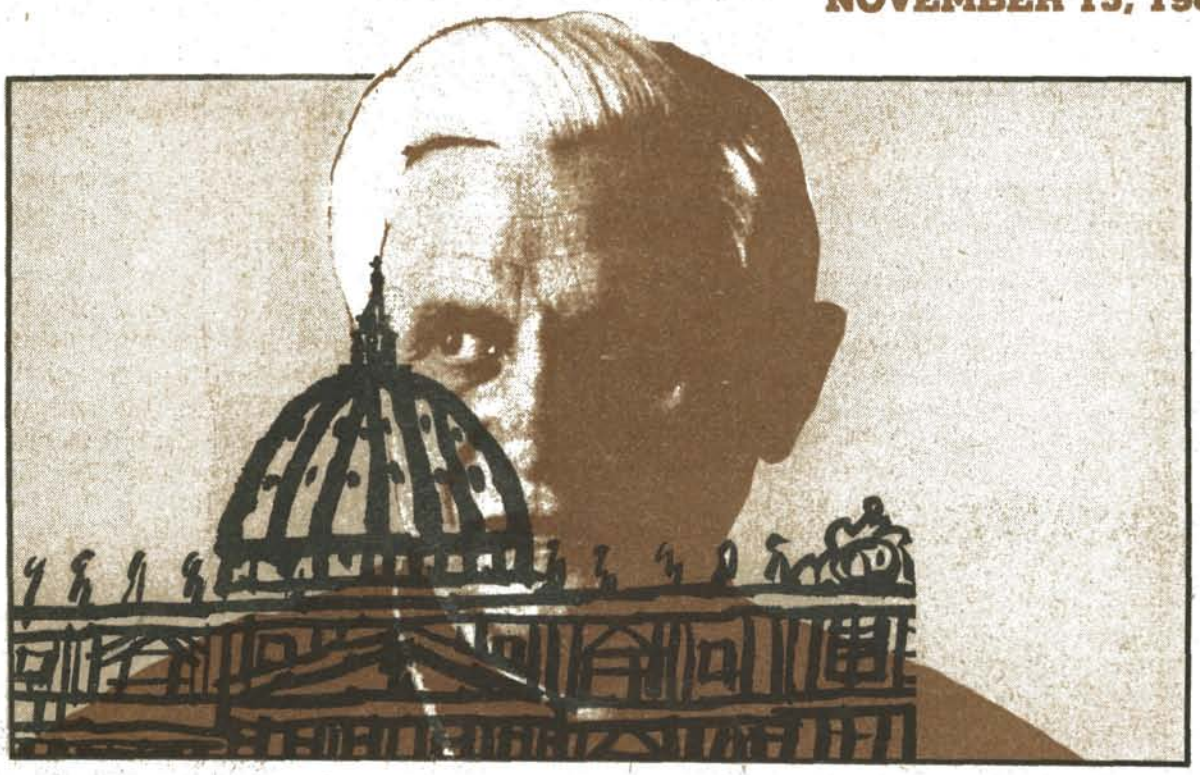

# THE RATZINGER FILE

*George G. Higgins* *Monika K. Hellwig* *George A. Lindbeck*

William G. Mayer **CHICAGO'S WASHINGTON** ● Nancy Amidei **STATISTICS CHEAT** ● Michael Wyschogrod **JEWS IN AMERICA** ● Una Chaudhuri **INDIA IN FASHION** ● Paul Surlis **CLAIMING THE SYNOD** ● Tessa Bielecki **TERESA** ● Abigail McCarthy **THE CHURCH WAS READY**

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# Correspondence

## When justice peeks

South Bend, Ind.

*To the Editors:* I am always put off by discussions which deal with abortion as if it were only a women's issue. So ingrained are the thinking habits, unconscious assumptions, and language patterns with which the question is approached that balanced discourse has become almost impossible. It is ironic that, **although women are *at best* only fifty percent responsible for pregnancy, in a** world where men dominate in positions of power, and therefore in responsibility, the major moral burden of sexual behavior is put on women. Thus in China the chosen policy of population control is abortion, even though another mechanistic solution, vasectomy, would be simpler and less destructive. And here, in the United States, after considerable progress, we still hear the vocabulary for the female prostitute far oftener than that for the male patron.

As John Garvey says ["Who Confers Value?", August 9], "The argument does come down . . . to values, even religious ones." For those with religious values, equality is mandated by the second Great Commandment — "Love your neighbor as yourself" — an awareness which the church, both communal and institutional, must yet achieve. But language shapes and reflects values, and as we move into a new age in which many believe an equal balance between masculine and feminine values is incumbent on all if we are to survive on the planet, the language of pregnancy becomes, "They are pregnant," or "We are pregnant." The abortion debater is offered a special challenge now because women are so often alone in pregnancy. But then it must be emphasized that they are "impregnated" women who are alone, and we must ask why. Who are the men who impregnate women who seek abortions? Who are the fathers? At the present point in the debate we barely recognize that there are fathers. But "to impregnate" or "to abandon" are active verbs.

Equal rights for women mean equal responsibilities for men, before and after conception. So to balance relations between masculine and feminine, to raise consciousness, to observe the Commandment, to advance the argument, the abortion debate must give equal time, equal space, equal attention, equal concern to the male component. Peace cannot be achieved if justice is blind only in one eye. Finding a real solution to any problem cannot be expected if fully one-half the equation is regularly ignored.

IRENE P. LEAHY

## An outside opinion

Chicago, Ill.

*To the Editors:* As a teacher of Jewish liturgical arts, I take issue with a statement in Thomas Day's reply to your readers on church music ["Dissonance Over Church Music," May 3]: "Gone are the days when Judaism and Christianity put these [scriptural] words in a special language and a special chant to remind us of his 'otherness.' "

Mr. Day is obviously out of touch with Jewish worship practices and the present-day revival of interest in Hebrew language and liturgical cantillation. Only a small number of Reform Jewish congregations ever abandoned Hebrew and traditional music entirely. Most synagogues in the United States and elsewhere have retained Jewish liturgy as codified in the late Middle Ages, along with the cantillation modes particular to their geographical locations. (Most American Jews are of Eastern European ancestry and use tunes that originated there.)

Unfortunately, Jewish music in the United States increasingly became the "property" of synagogue professionals (cantors, musical directors, and choirs), while "the Jews in the pews" were a passive audience, rather than participants in liturgical expression. Thankfully, this is changing. In the last twenty years there has been a resurgence of interest in Hebrew language and traditional liturgy that has touched all major denominational groups in American Judaism.

I have more students (children and adults, male and female) than I can presently handle — and so do most other Jewish liturgical tutors and teachers of my acquaintance. Our students are eager to learn the practical skills of Jewish liturgy so that they can lead synagogue services and chant the weekly scriptural portions in Hebrew.

What we do lack, however, is our own version of the St. Louis Jesuits. We American Jews are still too dependent on Eastern European Jewish liturgy and have not yet developed cohesive liturgical forms that are authentically Jewish, yet North American in musical mode and expression.

As an active observer of Catholic music, I say, "Bravo!" to those modern liturgists decried by Thomas Day. Although I would not classify their compositions as great genius, they have created a body of singable hymns, based on Scripture, that can be used in a number of different musical settings. It has only been twenty years since the Catholic church in America began to create its own body of vernacular hymns. In my outsider's opinion, the church has done remarkably well.

KATE KINSER

## Falsified documents

Waltham, Mass.

*To the Editors:* Father Joseph Komonchak's "What's Happening to Doctrine?" [September 6], point out the pivotal role of Pope John XXIII's opening address at Vatican II, but fails to note that at one critical point concerning doctrine it was "incredibly falsified" for American readers — including many

*(Continued on page 653)*

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# MIDEAST PEACE: HOPE ON A TIGHTROPE

AMERICAN TOURIST Leon Klinghoffer, tragically murdered at the hands of four PLO terrorists, was not the only fatality listed in the early chronicles of the hijacked Italian cruise liner *Achille Lauro*. Also listed in critical condition, if not destined for the obituary column, were hopes for peace talks in the Middle East — hopes fanned last February when PLO officials and King Hussein of Jordan reached an accord. Why is it, then, that a fragile peace process seems to have survived even the international chaos of this most recent episode in what has become a demoralizing spiral of violence?

One answer is that several leading roles in the Middle East drama are currently being played by moderates — that is, if moderation can be understood in relative terms within the context of the region. An appraisal of who and what wait in the wings to succeed, or at least to overturn, today's leaders in Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and the loosely organized ranks of the PLO suggests that the present scene may be the moderates' last chance to act before curtains.

Boldly, and with precise timing, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres seized the occasion to present a seven-point peace plan before the United Nations General Assembly on October 21, exactly two weeks after the *Achille Lauro* was hijacked. "Let us shield this flickering hope from threatening winds. Let us not consign this moment of hope to the fate of missed opportunities," he said, addressing several specific issues crucial to King Hussein's overtures for negotiations with Israel.

Hovering over the shoulder of Mr. Peres, however, are less conciliatory leaders with more expansionist aims: Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, both of the Likud — the party scheduled to succeed Mr. Peres's Labor Alignment less than one year from now. Mr. Sharon in particular has been an active opponent of the Peres peace proposal, one illustration that moderate influence is waning in Israel. Furthermore — simply as an index of the political climate — whatever else support for extremist Meir Kahane's presence in the Knesset may signify, it grinds down the delicate cause of moderation.

Yet these internal differences pale when compared with the conflicts gnawing at the rest of the Middle East's cast of characters. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, for example, is subject to the same lethal pressures that saw to the assassination of his predecessor, Anwar Sadat. Despite his recent outbursts of indignation toward the U.S. for its interception of the Egyptian commercial airplane (caught transporting the Italian cruise ship's hijackers), Mubarak has, true-to-form, expressed cautious support for the peace plan proposed by Mr. Peres. "Some good points and some unsatisfactory ones," Mubarak remarked about the plan. By Middle-East standards, that's fairly encouraging.

Likewise, King Hussein of Jordan continues to walk a tightrope between Israel and its Arab neighbors. As *persona non grata* in the eyes of Syria, Jordan's




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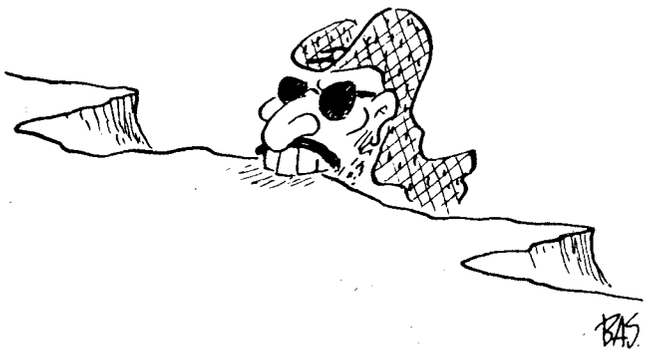


neighbor, for his thin alliance with the PLO forces under Syria's avowed enemy, Yasir Arafat, King Hussein seems to be edging closer to negotiations with Israel even while performing his duties as public relations man for the PLO. In fact, his recent gestures have caused some Middle-East watchers to scrutinize the possibility of a realignment in the Arab world in which Jordan takes up the precarious path of Egypt in recognizing Israel and forming a treaty with her. Jordan acting independently of the PLO? Possible, but it seems doubtful.

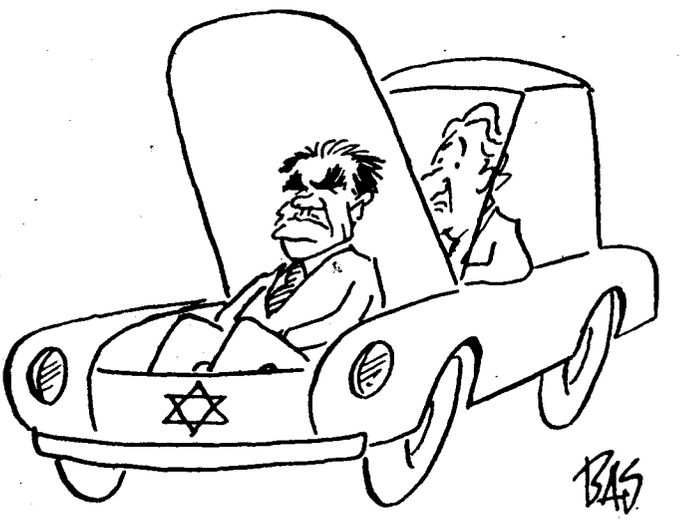
It could be argued, of course, that self-interest motivates the king to seek an agreement with Israel: his country is half-populated with refugees, and the Israeli-occupied West Bank is populated by Jordanian citizens deprived of Israeli civil rights. On the other hand, the risks of too close an association with Israel in the view of Syria have prompted the king to seek a $1.9 billion purchase of arms from the U.S. In an effort to give impetus to possible negotiations, the U.S. Senate wisely postponed the sale, tentatively until March 1986, contingent upon direct negotiations with Israel *and*, King Hussein insists, with "legitimate Palestinian representatives."

Oddly enough, the Soviet Union may lend support to the Middle-East peace effort if the rumors that Mr. Gorbachev is planning to allow widespread Jewish emigration to Israel do prove true. France's generous offer to transport the Soviet émigrés may encourage the action. If the Soviets were to resume diplomatic relations with Israel, King Hussein's hope that at least the two superpowers (if not the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council) would initiate the peace talks might gain the full support of both Israel and the U.S.

But the prior question is: Can King Hussein bring to the negotiating table Palestinian representatives who "represent peace, not terror," as Mr. Peres stipulated in his U.N. address? The question is familiar and might be interpreted as a sign that nothing has been accomplished since February. But that is precisely the point. This is indeed the same question that was asked last winter and which had King Hussein trying to convince Israel and its supporters that Yasir Arafat qualified as such a representative.

Today, after Mr. Arafat's duplicity was exposed for his role in the cruise ship hijacking, whatever legitimacy he may have had is now overshadowed by his reputation as a terrorist. Mr. Arafat does not, however, represent the extremity of violence among leaders of the diffuse PLO. But he may have incurred enough international loss of credibility either to cause him to seek more moderate means than before, or to cause King Hussein to break the partnership. The *New York Times* reported that a "key advisor" to King Hussein, when asked what would happen were Mr. Arafat to refuse to reach an agreement with the king, answered: "In this case, he is announcing he cannot go along with the peace process and then the Palestinians themselves would have to choose a new leader . . . Nobody is indispensable." But an advisor does not a king make; from King Hussein's late October meeting with Mr. Arafat, no evidence has emerged to support the notion of any breach.

So why even hope for peace talks, let alone for some authentic peace in the region? Because we cannot afford not to. Repudiating terrorism, recognizing Israel's right to exist, and finding a solution — however temporary or short of being fully satisfactory — to the problem of Palestinian self-determination and the Israeli occupation and absorption of the West Bank are worth the effort that is ignited by the sparks of hope. To accept as commonplace the violence of continued terrorism; to accept the suffering of millions of refugees; to refuse to acknowledge Palestinian rights or the creation of the unique State of Israel; to watch that ally slide self-destructively



toward permanent military control over a resisting minority population — such resignation is unworthy and, worse, ultimately unrealistic.

When Leon Klinghoffer's body arrived in America, New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato said, "Leon lives on." So must our hopes for peace in the Middle East.

# LIVING WITH DEMAGOGUES

The booing of the Canadian national anthem by partisan baseball fans at Yankee Stadium last summer was boorish and an American embarrassment. It was symptomatic of a false nationalism that rides rather freely on these slopes and shores. It was an ugly but nevertheless contiguous step down from last



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year's Olympic-size chants of "USA, USA," which boomed from the Los Angeles Coliseum and echoed through our TV homes.

In recent months another false cacophony has been heard to resound, this time in fourteen cities, from Los Angeles to New York. Like nationalism, it too is virtuous in many of its aspects, many of its effects. This preachment calls its adherents to personal responsibility, love of the group, self-respect, economic progress, and power. (Power is its chosen acronym: People Organized and Working for Economic Rebirth.) But the power of Louis Farrakhan, and the inspiration of his call for black regeneration, is, like false nationalism, predicated on something else again — fear and hatred. Its product is the vitriolic soul.

Lord knows, although the government seems impervious, that things have gotten desperately worse for black Americans of late. Since 1980, black families here have lost economic ground, both in absolute and in comparative terms. One-third of all black Americans now live below the poverty line. So do one-half of all black children. Black joblessness is more than twice that of whites. It didn't take a Louis Farrakhan to tell black people these things. But maybe it does the rest of us.

When he filled the Forum in Los Angeles, and Madison Square Garden in New York, it was a cross section of black America that came to hear the Reverend Farrakhan. Also there in Los Angeles was Thomas Metzger, head of the White People's Political Association and former head of the California Ku Klux Klan. He came not only to applaud, but to lend financial support. Bigotry loves company. That is the long underside of Louis Farrakhan's more conspicuous message to

# LAYING CLAIM

## THE SYNOD MUST DEFINE ITSELF

AS THE SPECIAL synod draws near and we continue to reflect on items for its agenda we ought to consider that the very nature and function of synods and the synodal process stand in need of clarification and reform.

It is clear that the intention of the Second Vatican Council in recommending the institution of a synod was to provide a system of checks-and-balances against curial bureaucracy which should be the civil service of the papacy and the universal episcopate, but which in practice functions as a bureaucracy *over* the college of bishops. Witness the U.S. hierarchy petitioning Rome three times for permission to administer Communion in the hand!

It will be recalled that one of the most decisive events for the self-understanding of the bishops as participants in the Second Vatican Council occurred in the very first days of the council. It made headlines when the council was prorogued because the bishops refused to accept the lists of names submitted to them by curial officials from which drafters of documents were to be chosen. If the bishops had accepted the Curia's lists they would already have forfeited in advance many, if not most, of the reforms which later were achieved. By refusing, the bishops said in effect: this is our council; we make the decisions together with the pope. The college of bishops now needs to claim the synod as theirs in a similar fashion.

At all times the synod has been greatly circumscribed in its scope and function and this raises the further question: who is the appropriate legislator for a system of checks-and-balances? It is hardly the body whose very power is being curbed.

The synod did function as a somewhat independent body for a time, and to it we owe the statement, "Justice in the World" (1971), which is to action on behalf of justice and concern for social transformation in our time what Chalcedon and Nicaea were to christology in theirs.

However, the synod forfeited its (limited) independence in 1974. Then it entrusted to Paul VI responsibility for "its" final statement on evangelization. Thus we got the "Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization," *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, a document which, ironically, speaks about inculturating the Gospel more fully in local churches!

The point at issue is not whether *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is a good or a bad statement; the point is: what should have been a synodal statement became a papal-curial one. The same thing happened — more crucially — with the 1977 synod on the family. We recall Archbishop Quinn's initial attempt to call for reconsideration of the papal teaching on the morality of artificial contraceptives and how quickly Quinn retracted, presumably under pressure. Again, the bishops issued no final statement as a body, but the pope issued it *for* them, while taking care to restate his position on contraception as if it were that of the entire synod.

The reason usually given by the synod for its failure to formulate a final statement is lack of time. But this is hardly a valid excuse. Why not lengthen the time of preparation, or, if need be, entrust the synodal proceedings to a committee of bishops and theologians chosen by the synod, and then reconvene later to issue the final statement? The synod of bishops owes it to the church to take their role and work seriously. What would have happened to the church after the epochal Council of Jerusalem (which also had its detractors who wanted to undo it) if Paul had said: "Here are some notes; why don't you issue a statement in my name on that 'Judaizer question?' " Instead, Paul issued his own statement and "withstood Cephas to his face" (see Gal. 2:11 ff.). Right now we could do with a little more of that spirit.

PAUL SURLIS

*(Father Paul Surlis is an associate professor of theology at St. John's University in New York.)*



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black America. All the rest is but the contagious, contiguous step up from his "gutter" commentary.

Like false nationalism, this disease degenerates not only its fabricators but its hearers. Julius Lester is correct when he says that no amount of poverty, deprivation, or suffering justifies hatred. What little pottage, Maummar el-Qaddafi's $5 million pledge to the Reverend Farrakhan, for which to sell one's soul.

They are courageous who have spoken out clearly against the "filthy religion" of racial and religious bigotry. They are prudent who have condemned it before it is sown in their community like weeds in the night. And those are wise who, realizing the heart of the times, have not only condemned such hatred, but have instead watered that languishing garden which the Reverend Farrakhan seeks to invade and confiscate for his own.

## SAVINGS BY FAITH

Early during Mr. Reagan's first term, a luncheon discussion of the economy took place at New York City's Lehrman Institute. The discussion was off the record, but prominent among the participants were three individuals of very distinct political persuasions yet having in common the same initial letter of their last names. Let us call it, for purposes of convenience only, *K*.

K-One was a young neoliberal writer, now the editor of a major political weekly. He led the discussion off with some cutting comments on the administration's tax favors for the rich. K-Two was an older neoconservative intellectual, indeed a gentleman sometimes considered a "godfather" of the neoconservative movement. He urbanely pooh-poohed K-One's allegedly priggish (if not downright envious) concern with the opulent life-styles of the rich and infamous. K-Three was a left-liberal, an economics writer, today a regular contributor to K-One's journal. He kept pushing K-Two on the likelihood that the administration's supply-side economics were going to succeed. Rich people save more money than poor people; savings equal new investments; new investments equal greater productivity; greater productivity equals more jobs and well-being all around. K-Three appeared skeptical about each stage in this trickle-up, then trickle-down chain of theory.

At one point, K-Three turned to K-Two and asked what measure K-Two would accept as a definitive test of whether the Reagan economics program was a success or failure. K-Two did not hesitate. *Savings*, he replied — whether the savings rate goes up as supply-siders predicted.

The savings rate did not, of course, go up. In fact, it went down. Most recently, it has gone down precipitously. Has K-Two concluded that the administration's policy has been a failure, and withdrawn his support? Not to our knowledge. Is this surprising? Not really. When the world does not end on the day the prophet had foretold, the followers hardly ever abandon the prophet. They make adjustments; they find new reasons for the old faith. The pattern is familiar.

If it is particularly noteworthy in this case, that is only because Mr. K-Two would be the first to deride this pattern when it is transferred from the Last Things to politics and economics. Like so many neoconservatives, he is a scorner of "ideology" — up to a point.

COMING: CHRISTMAS BOOKS

# Who is poor & why?

## STATISTICS CHEAT

### POVERTY AMERICAN-STYLE

A WOMAN I KNOW has raised four children alone, much of the time on remarkably little money. Lately, she says, it seems as though some malevolent force has found out where she lives. Rarely in "good" health, an accident put her temporarily out of work and into her state's workers' compensation system. Since those benefits are frequently late, she often finds herself without any cash for days at a time, and had just been served with an eviction notice when the radiator on the family car blew up in her son's face. They can't afford health insurance, so the antibiotics he needs mean one more debt — this time at the drug store.

She and her children are just five of the 33,700,000 people counted as poor in the government's August 27 report: "Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States." And except that they have more children than most (the mean number of children in poor families is 2.3), they're pretty typical. They're hard-working (two-thirds of poor families include wage earners), but low-earning (the number of full-time workers living in poverty is growing), and they're not getting welfare (only about one-third of poor families do). Like millions of American families they live in a suburb, belong to a church, and go to the neighborhood schools (one child gets straight "A's," while another doesn't like school at all).

They are typical as well in one other respect that differentiates them from Americans with larger incomes: their income sources are brutally unreliable. They rarely know from one week to the next whether they'll have any money, or how much, because they rely on day labor, seasonal work, or government programs, most of which do not include health coverage or fringe benefits of any kind. Spurts of income see-saw with periods of compiling debts; any unexpected expense throws the family budget into chaos — sometimes for months.

The poverty line for a four-person family may be $10,600, but that doesn't mean that poor families have $200 a week regularly coming in to plan on. Furthermore, last year, the number of families with less than $5,000 income all year actually rose.



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For families like my friend's, the government's latest poverty report wasn't very encouraging. While it's true that the number of Americans living in poverty went down last year, three-fourths of the improvement was in white, two-parent families. For most others, like hers, the numbers barely went down. Despite a vigorous economic recovery, poverty actually *rose* for Hispanics, and for black children under age six. There was more poverty among single full-time workers with children, and overall, the poor were getting poorer and less likely to be helped by changes in the unemployment rate.

Reports like the government's recent one are difficult to read because they consist almost entirely of numbers — no catchy stories, no helpful narrative, just columns and columns of numbers. Yet behind each decimal and percentage point are the people who live with poverty, American-style. They are people for whom privacy, or kleenex, are luxuries, and for whom one meal a day is standard fare when the money runs out before the end of every month. Increasingly, they can't afford telephones, or bus fare, or any of the little things that keep most Americans in touch with one another. Daily they make demoralizing choices — like buying food *or* paying for medicine, adding to debts *or* having heat, leaving an eight-year-old at home alone *or* not going to work. In America, poverty is defined as having an income too low to provide even for emergency food needs, but it touches every aspect of daily life.

White House spokesman Patrick Buchanan said the decline in poverty represented a "triumph" for Reagan policies, and the president called it, "further proof that the greatest enemy of poverty is the free enterprise system." But not all analysts agree with that view.

For one thing, although the poverty rate declined from 15.2 percent in 1983 to 14.4 percent in 1984, the poverty rate is higher today than it was in 1980 (13 percent), or 1975 (12.3 percent), or 1970 (12.6 percent). Furthermore, the decline in poverty should have been greater given the strength of the economy; budget cuts in programs vital to poor people offset the good effects of economic growth. Experience from this and other recessions confirms that while economic recovery is important, it is not enough to make significant inroads into poverty — given who is poor and why.

The recovery didn't mean any increase in the minimum wage, and it certainly didn't signal an end to lower wages for women and minorities, or to unemployment for the men and women over fifty who lost their jobs to the recession. Those people aren't part of Mr. Buchanan's "triumph"; they're stuck in the poverty count. Moreover, with the recovery now slowing down, the poverty decline is leveling off at one of the highest rates in decades.

But all is not bleak. This most recent report (in the government's series of annual poverty reports) provides confirmation for two important points: (1) that government policies directed at preventing and alleviating poverty have an impact; without them, poverty remains high; and (2) poverty continues to go down for the one group on the receiving end of government benefits that are indexed to keep pace with rising prices — the elderly. It wasn't the economy or Reagan policies that helped them, but good, old-fashioned, New Deal-style solutions in the form of Social Security and Supplemental Security Income. If the latest poverty numbers provide little solace on other points, they are worth a lot on both these counts.

NANCY AMIDEI

## Of several minds: *John Garvey*

# ASYLUMS OF SANITY

### LESSONS FOR A DISTRACTED TIME

A FEW WEEKS AGO some friends and I drove to central Illinois's Amish country. There is a woman there who will cook for parties of ten or more. You have to reach her by letter, because of the Amish prohibition of electricity. For not too much money we were served a couple of large helpings of ham, chicken (obviously raised by the family, because it was delicious and didn't have the damp cardboard taste of most of the chicken you can buy these days), chicken dressing, fine gravy, mashed potatoes, a wonderful cole slaw, corn, fresh bread and jam, coffee, iced tea, and two kinds of pie. Substantial farm food for which you feel obliged to fast if you worry at all about moving from a walk to a waddle; but what was most interesting was the setting.

We were served in a long room at the side of the house. It was suspiciously well-lit, given the fact that no power lines were strung from the road to the house, and then I noticed that the lights on the walls were fueled by gas. The kitchen was illuminated in the same way. The rest of the rooms had small kerosene lights. It turned from light to dark during the time we spent there, and when we drove away we saw that the house looked absolutely dark from the outside, except for the rooms where we had eaten and the food had been cooked. A horse and buggy stood outside the house, not because someone thought it picturesque, but because that's the only way — other than foot — that Amish travel who aren't on the way out of their tradition.

The food was fine, and the drive during autumn was a pretty one, but what I think of most is the young women moving around the kitchen, the young man with the mustache-less beard who helped to serve us, the children, shy but obviously very comfortable and at home, peering around the legs of their elders at the outsiders through a kitchen door. I think of the horse and buggy, the lack of



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power lines, the kerosene light. What impressed me is nothing romantic; I kept thinking about how hard it must be to live that way.

By coincidence, I had read at just about that time Lis Harris's good *New Yorker* articles (recently published as *Holy Days*, Simon & Shuster, $16.95) about the Lubavitcher Hasidim, the ultra-Orthodox Jews whose life sets them apart not only from other Jews but from the society at large — or I should say sets them apart in some ways and not in others, because their support for the more Orthodox religious parties in Israel and their opposition to those Hasidim who oppose all Zionism show that even those Jews who in many ways resemble the Amish are simply not able to withdraw from what the Amish are able to consider "the world."

What impressed me driving past dark houses with buggies parked in front was how people like the Amish and the Hasids had separated themselves, at the obvious cost of knowing that they had made decisions not only for themselves but for their children. They know they have done it. They are not, I think, naïve about the world they have separated themselves from. Maybe some of them are; others certainly are not.

I don't mean to equate the Amish and Hasids. Aside from the obvious fact that the Amish are Christians and the Hasids, Jews, there is the fact that the Amish do not proselytize among non-Amish Christians, whereas the Hasids actively seek to recruit non-Hasidic Jews. The Hasids take a fundamentalist view of Scripture (they do not, for example, accept the theory of evolution, preferring a literal reading of Genesis), but are not suspicious of education; the Amish, on the other hand, educate their children only to the eighth grade. Still, they are similar in choosing to live in a way which is radically at odds with the culture that surrounds them. Some would argue that this is really not a choice but a function of peer pressure — they are enveloped by their culture and would feel stranger separated from it than they feel within it. But it is a choice, because the simple fact is that, peer pressure notwithstanding, many young Amish and Hasids do leave their communities and become assimilated into the surrounding culture. It is too easy for us to understand why they make this choice. What intrigues me more is why so many stay.

Obviously, in some profound and no doubt complex way they find the lives they have in their communities better than they can imagine life being in the society around them. And they may be right. A recent review of Lenore J. Weitzman's *The Divorce Revolution* (The Free Press, $19.95) in the *New York Times Book Review* details Weitzman's argument that no-fault divorce laws have actually worked against women and children. Weitzman concludes that a woman who devotes herself to the family may be making a serious mistake. "The traditional law embodied the partnership concept of marriage by rewarding sharing and mutual investments in the marital community. Implicit in the new laws, in contrast, are incentives for investing in oneself, maintaining one's separate identity, and being self-sufficient. The new stress is on individual responsibility for one's future, rather than the partnership assumption of joint or reciprocal responsibilities."

I hope it will be obvious that I am not arguing against the assumption that women have every right to pursue careers of their own, or that the proper place for a woman is the kitchen. This is about something much more important than feminism. The problem with much of the feminist writing I've seen (here he clears his throat and prepares to deliver himself of a grave generality) is that, even while it opposes some of the worst directions of our culture, it is infected by some of our culture's worst assumptions.

The individualism Ms. Weitzman writes about is one of those assumptions; so is the belief that having a career matters very much, that you are somehow defined by what you do to make money. It may be that we are, but that ought to be an occasion for sorrow rather than something we assume to be inarguable and proper. Lis Harris, writing about the Hasids, made it clear that the father of one family was impatient with questions about what he did for a living, regarding work as the least important part of his life. What mattered was a life obedient to God's law. And in the schools for Hasidic children which she observed, the little girls, asked what they wanted to be when they grew up, answered, "A mother." To be expected, maybe, in a society where women are hardly encouraged to pursue careers. But the interesting thing is that the little boys answered the same question not by naming some line of work, as boys raised in a secular environment probably would; they said that when they grew up they wanted to be fathers.

The Amish and Hasids have this going for them: granting those things about their culture which perplex and bother us (the place of women in Hasidic society, for example, or the Amish insistence that buttons are ungodly and that wire-borne electricity is morally offensive), they are closer to an essential truth than the culture in which they find themselves living as tolerated aliens. They are right to believe that only one thing matters, and our whole life should be devoted to it, and anything else is a distraction.

I know people who regard lives of this sort as an escape from "reality" . . . reality being, apparently, the sort of thing we see advertised in magazines, or the determined pursuit of money and power, or the set of things which politicians tell us really matters. They also see monasteries as places where "reality" is avoided.

There is no doubt that reality can be avoided in a monastery, or in a Hasidic household, or on an Amish farmstead. But monasteries are something the world could use more of: they are sane asylums, places where people are trying not to be distracted from the one necessary thing in the world. The lives of the Hasids and the Amish are turned in the same direction. Perhaps this is an escape of sorts; but if it is, it is not an avoidance of something more true and real than the Hasids and Amish know. (Could Henry Kissinger tell the Lubavitcher rebbe something the rebbe really needs to know? Could the rebbe tell Kissinger something even more important?) If this is an escape or flight from something, it is like an escape from a bad dream, or like fleeing a burning house. JOHN GARVEY



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## Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

# THE CHURCH WAS READY

### A POSTSCRIPT TO VATICAN II

*For Catholics before Vatican II, the land of the free was preeminently the land of Sister Says – except, of course, for Sister, for whom it was the land of Father Says.* Wilfrid Sheed
*Frank and Maisie*

THERE IS a crying need for a dispassionate social history of twentieth-century American Catholicism. Why? I have been struck in reading the round-ups of opinion anticipatory of the approaching synod at how varied and differing are the views of the preconciliar church in this country, and how often, even in the case of theologians, the view is narrowly based on personal experience. What was it like to be a Catholic before Vatican II? Everyone, like Wilfrid Sheed in the statement above, is right in his answer, but only partly so. Misconceptions abound.

(High on the list of these misconceptions — and there are many — are two which seem to be cherished by almost everyone: one, that the reformation of the liturgy was launched by Vatican II; the other, that renewal in religious orders began with the document *Perfectae Caritatis*.)

The median age of Americans living today is only thirty-one years! Today's church members who are under the age of twenty-five were not born when John XXIII called the church to distinguish "the signs of the times" as Jesus, the pope noted, had recommended. Thirty-year-olds were only four; forty-year-olds, fourteen; and those fifty today were only twenty-four. A minority of the fifty-year-olds may have had their understanding of the universal church broadened in their college years. Otherwise, it is probable that a good half of America's Catholics, if they remember anything at all, remember the pre-Vatican II church in terms of family practice and a particular parish or school.

Those of us who *do* remember tend to be selective in our memories. Depending on experience and temperament, we tend to paint the pre-conciliar church in black or white. The stories, for example, of bullying, ignorant, authoritarian priests and sadistic parochial school nuns are legion. The market for them seems inexhaustible. Then there are the writings of others, like myself, who tend to take a more roseate view. In answer to the question "Why Catholic?" I wrote some time ago, for example:

> I must admit that quite possibly I would not be a Catholic if my earlier experience had been of the church as an enemy of the intellect or of the creative impulse and beauty. So many people insist that they met with such enmity in childhood or early adolescence that I have to suppose that parochial life was — and still is — inimical to mind and creativity in many parts of the country. One could call it a grace that the church of my youth was the ally of intelligence and excellence in learning, and affirmative of beauty and art and music. My experience was not totally unusual. The brilliant and controversial author, Mary McCarthy, has written in her *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*, "There was a Catholicism I learned from my mother and from the simple parish priests and nuns in Minneapolis, which was, on the whole, a religion of beauty and goodness, however imperfectly realized."

And I could write of the atmosphere of the Catholic college at which I taught in the 1940s:

> The so-called "Catholic Renaissance" was at its joyful height. To be Catholic meant no longer that one kept one's religion in one mental compartment, one's secular knowledge in another . . . The church was being rediscovered. To be a Catholic now meant that one was part of a worldwide community which shared a splendid heritage of arts and letters, and in which tremendous intellectual effort was being put into the restructuring of

*Jean Charlot's rendition of Father Harold Gardiner, S.J., giving the Campion Award to Frank Sheed and Maisie Ward, drawn for the Christmas 1960 issue of* Sheed & Ward's Own Trumpet *(which pointed out that "Mrs. Sheed is the one on the left").*



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human society to cope with modern evils. It meant that one could claim affinity with the ancient Greek and Roman and Hebraic cultures from which Christianity sprang; it meant one could identify the universal in the tribal and ethnic cultures to which Christianity had adapted; it meant that the church could affirm what was true and beautiful wherever it was found.

I wrote almost lyrically of the vigor of Catholic participation in the world of arts and letters, listing a litany of authors and thinkers seriously discussed in the journals of the day — among them Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, Bernanos, Mauriac, Claudel, Undset, Maritain, Gilson, Bergson, the Irish writers, and the newly emergent first-class American writers like J.F. Powers and Flannery O'Connor. The campus was alive with discussion.

Granted, it was an unusually good college and yes, all right, on the same campus at the same time a priest was teaching his New Testament students that attendance at a "B" movie was a mortal sin, and faculty argued whether it was permissible or not to invoke "mental reservations" when taking the Legion of Decency oath. Few had the courage not to take it. (What twenty-five-year-old knows what the oath was, and worries about "mental reservations"?)

I, like everyone else, experienced the church I was born into as *dogmatic, defensive, closed, puritanical*, and, to the extent that there was no allowance for theological speculation, *anti-intellectual*. The church had all the answers. They were summarized in the catechism which I once knew entirely by heart. It is interesting to note which of those answers, repeated over and over, now stick in my mind. "Why did God make me?" Answer: "To know Him, to Love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him in the next." No mention here of the love of neighbor included in Jesus' summarization of the Commandments. The emphasis was on a personal relationship with the Creator. "What constitutes a mortal sin?" Answer: "A grave matter, sufficient reflection, and full consent of the will." That was an answer we clung to, for the avoidance of hell seemed even more important than going to heaven. Even murder might not have been preceded by sufficient reflection.

*Defensive*. We learned what we learned about church and Bible history in order to refute the claim of heretics and unbelievers. Apologetics was the order of the day. We might have all been in training for the Catholic Evidence Guild. Only Catholics belonged to the true church. Only they had the truth, and the truth had been laid out once and for all. (There was no thought of possible further movement of the Holy Spirit, nor of any new or developing theology.)

*Closed*. However aware those of us who did not live in Catholic ghettos might be of the virtues of our Protestant and Jewish neighbors, we knew that we could have no truck with them in an ecclesial sense. We could take no part in Protestant weddings. If we ventured so far as to attend weddings and funerals, we were not to stand, kneel, sing, or do anything that indicated that we accepted this service as a church ceremony. We all knew the answer in Msgr. Conway's *The Question Box,* the undisputed reference in every Catholic school library, to the question "Is not the 'bond of charity' (John 13) sufficient to unite men in the fellowship of Christ?" Answer: "Our Lord, who tells us to love our neighbor, also says: 'He that believeth not, shall be condemned.' "

*Puritanical*. We were told that Easter was the greatest feast of the church, but I cannot deny that the almost total emphasis of the pre-conciliar church was on the sufferings of Jesus, and on self-deprivation as the way to please him. The enjoyment of creation and the fulfillment of potential was suspect. It goes without saying the preoccupation with sexual sin, which goes on even to this day, was an overwhelming part of this mind set.

When I have said all this I must still say that the church was our home. It fed our need for a personal relationship with God, with a multiplicity of pious practices, novenas, and observances of the church year. It was a profoundly Marian church and Marian devotion, however sentimentalized and at times semi-idolatrous, was a gentling, loving, and humane influence. (To pray with the mother of Jesus, no matter how imperfectly, was to celebrate his humanity and to participate in Pentecost.)

Finally, the pre-conciliar church was richly various. There were any number of national churches in which homilies and hymns came in a variety of languages. There were saints for every season and every need. There were all kinds of religious communities, each with its own spiritual traditions. And, despite its limitations, I became aware, as I grew older, of the church in America as a church ever changing.

It was imperfect; it was culture-bound; but it was a church of prayer and alive with movements. The American liturgical movement was more than fifty years old at the time of the council; the literary revival, thirty years or more. The movement to recover the original charisms of the religious orders and to adapt them to the modern world had been launched by Puis XII in the early 1950s. The social action movements which united the best of the clergy and the laity in the Depression years had grown and multiplied — among them, the Catholic Worker movement, the interracial movement, the rural life movement, the various Catholic labor movements, the Christian Family movements, etc., etc. — all had plowed the ground. When Pope John convoked the council he could say that the church was ready. He referred to the rising growth of "the immense energies of the apostolate of prayer and action in all fields." He talked of a clergy better equipped in learning and virtue for its mission, and of a laity "which has become ever more conscious of its responsibilities."

The aged pope looking down the corridors of time to the previous council could see in the church a gradual growth of healthy community bearing within it the seeds of new beginnings. We, too, must look back to find the roots of that which has borne fruit. Otherwise, how can we really know what to keep and what to discard, and what the nature of our new beginning should be now?

ABIGAIL McCARTHY



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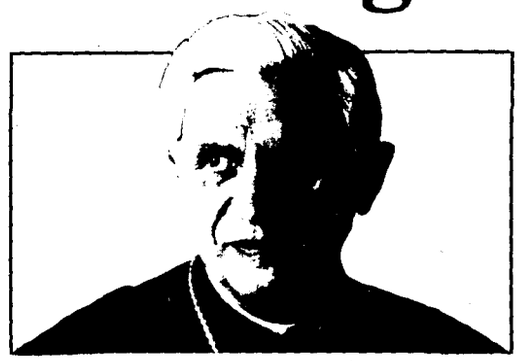
# The Ratzinger file



## GEORGE A. LINDBECK

## But if one despairs . . .

WHEN NORMAL CHANNELS of communication and control fail, try the mass media. This is the strategy Cardinal Ratzinger has followed in this book-length interview (which he has reviewed and approved). It is hard to think of any other explanation for why the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, successor to Grand Inquisitors, second only to the pope, has unburdened himself at great and uninhibited length to a popular journalist.

This explanation fits with what the cardinal says regarding the institutional weakness of his position. He notes, for example, that when he was Archbishop of Munich he presided over a large and well-financed ecclesiastical bureaucracy, while his present staff is small, over-worked, and underpaid (the same, by the way, holds for the Curia as a whole). More generally, Rome has lost the support it may once have had from non-ecclesiastical establishments. Even within the church, the press and the academy are arrayed against it. They are swayed, Ratzinger believes, by the culturally decisive class in Western countries: the affluent, educated, liberal bourgeoisie (which an American, following Daniel Bell, might call the "new class").

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The cardinal regards this class as the producer, product, and victim of the present late stage of free-market capitalism (unlike American neo-conservatives, his anti-Marxism does not lead him to be pro-capitalist). Western societies have lapsed into a hedonistic consumerism, destructive of both nature and tradition, ending in aimlessness. Many try to compensate for the vacuum of meaning in their lives by psychological therapies, Eastern spiritualities, and fashionable neo-Marxisms. Catholic "progressives" (Ratzinger dislikes the term) accommodate to these developments in an effort to make the faith attractive and relevant, but in the process betray both Christianity and humanity. Morality is relativized, the clergy and religious are in disarray, questionable forms of feminism flourish, the authority of Scripture and doctrine erodes, and the very christological foundations of the faith are undermined by revisionist interpretations. So pervasive is the malady that traditionalist reactions such as that of Archbishop Lefebvre are understandable. They are in their way as bad at the primary disease, but in present circumstances less dangerous.

Ratzinger's analysis of liberation theologies is representative of his wider critique. Contrary to the self-image they try to project, they do not grow out of grass-roots struggles against oppression, but are culturally-imperialistic European and North American exports promoted in the third world by Westernized intellectuals. The fight of these intellectuals against sinful social structures may at times be personally costly for them, but it also brings far more press coverage (and, if successful, far more power) than does the lonely battle against sin in the heart. (It is on the doctrine of sin that Ratzinger would like to work if he had a chance to return to scholarship.)

JOSEPH CARDINAL RATZINGER is one of the most powerful officials in the Catholic church. As prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he is also a distinguished theologian in his own right. The interviews he has given, now assembled into an approved text *(The Ratzinger Report,* with Vittorio Messori, translated by Salvator Attanasio and Graham Harrison, Ignatius Press, $9.95, 205 pp.), have provoked heated discussion in Europe and the U.S. *Commonweal* has asked two leading theologians, one Protestant and one Catholic, as well as a close observer and experienced official of the American church to comment on Cardinal Ratzinger's "report."

THE EDITORS



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Needless to say, those whom the cardinal regards as authentically devout among ordinary believers resist the self-appointed prophets. They suspect that neo-Marxism even in Christian guise will in the long run do no better in providing food, freedom, and justice than do the older varieties of Communism. What they chiefly want from the church, in any case, is not bread for the body (which, to be sure, Ratzinger is careful to insist is important), but the same, eternal, life-giving meat and drink which it has always offered. This is true of the common people everywhere, whether they be the non-intellectuals of the first world, the politically oppressed of the second, or the poverty-stricken (as well as intellectually and politically deprived) of the third. It is on behalf of these, the poor and lowly, that Ratzinger sees himself battling against the powers that be. Yet so strong are these powers, so effectively have they immobilized even bishops, that he (like John Paul II himself, though in a different way) has adopted the populist tactic of mobilizing mass opinion in support of Rome against what he regards as an elite opposition.

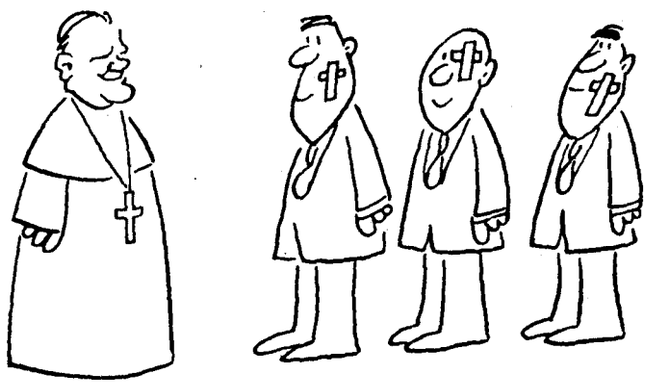
As befits a populist tract, Ratzinger's remedy in this book is uncomplicated: adhere to Vatican II in what an American might call a strict-constructionist way. Both traditionalist rejections of the council and progressivist attempts to go beyond it by "following its spirit" must be opposed. No changes are allowable except those explicitly authorized by the council and by its authentic interpreter, the Holy See. It is almost as if Ratzinger had reverted to a Denzinger mentality. The content of the church's teaching has expanded (Ratzinger does genuinely approve of Vatican II and thinks the church would be even worse off without it), and the style of exercising authority is different, but the hermeneutics of doctrine remain much the same.

Ratzinger says, however, that he has not changed. He claims to be no different now than when he was numbered among the progressives in the sixties and was (until 1973) an active member of the editorial board of *Concilium*. It is others who have altered. Yet in this book he does not say, as he has in the past, that the Eastern Orthodox need not accept the Roman dogmas of the last thousand years (i.e., since the schism) as a condition for reunion. Also he admits to now being more in favor of traditional Marian devotions (e.g., Lourdes and Fatima) and extra-liturgical practices (e.g., the rosary and Benediction) than he once was. Further, he here seems to think that appeals to the continuity and unanimity of tradition suffice to settle such issues as women's ordination, whereas he elsewhere shows himself well aware that some unanimous and long-standing teachings of the church (for example, on slavery and religious liberty) have drastically altered. If positions change in one area, why not another? Differentiating criteria are needed, but what the cardinal offers is, "Rome has spoken, the case is closed."

This reliance on the central magisterium seems, however, more the product of despair than of authoritarianism. Bishops cannot act effectively as individuals, and regional episcopal synods cannot be trusted. An even more basic problem is that scholarly *ressourcement* (the historical-critical return to the sources of the faith in the Bible and in early tradition which offered so much promise at the time of Vatican II) has become hopelessly complex and confusing. Only the Holy See remains as a bulwark against chaos, but even this, so the cardinal concludes, is ineffective: it is disregarded both by the traditionalist right and the progressivist left.

There is no recourse except to mobilize the masses, but whether they are as much in favor of the cardinal's positions as he thinks is doubtful. The Baroque Bavarian piety in which he grew up (and of which he speaks appreciatively) has few remaining counterparts. Nor does it seem likely that the new developments he approves, such as the Cursillo and charismatic movements, will be the dominant shapers of the folk Catholicism of the future. In places like the United States, the Roman Catholic populace has now been largely incorporated into the new class and is deeply imbued with the progressivism Ratzinger deplores. The majority has been resistant to Rome on birth control, and may well prove equally intractable on many other issues. Only time will tell.

Meanwhile, Ratzinger has produced a highly intelligent, learned, readable, and at times infuriatingly undiscriminating broadside. Christological errors, wayward exegesis, and support for women's ordination, for example, often sound in this interview as if they were part of a seamless whole. Such jumbling of categories can on occasion offend those who are basically on his side (on christology and the defects of Bultmann's exegesis, but not on women's ordination, for example) even more than against his primary targets. Further, non-Roman friends of Rome, whether Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, or Reformation Protestant, will be appalled at what appears to be his stress on the unilateral supremacy of the central teaching office. They have hoped for a Roman magisterium in dialogue with the whole church and visibly subject to God's Word as witnessed to in Scriptures and tradition. This, however, becomes impossible if one despairs, as Ratzinger seems to have done, of the struggle pursued at Vatican II for a spiritually, intellectually, and communally persuasive hermeneutic which incorporates traditional emphases and yet does not reject a historically critical approach. This despair over access to the sources of the faith and consequent uncritical and one-sided emphasis on the official magisterium is, for a Lutheran such as myself, the fundamental theological failure of this book.





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# MONIKA K. HELLWIG

## I respect but deplore . . .

THIS SO-CALLED report should be read only by those in sound health, supportive family situations, and deeply satisfying employment. That, however, is not entirely nor even mainly because of Cardinal Ratzinger's positions presented therein. The trouble begins long before one can get any inkling of the cardinal's views. The "report" is a thoroughly muddled piece of journalism. What is the opinion of the reporter, supplied subsequently, rather than of Ratzinger? Which parts of the extended leading questions, sometimes paragraphs long, were actually asked in the interviews? Where do direct quotations begin and end? Where and why have sections been lifted out of one interview and spliced into another? It is frequently not at all clear.

The text — originally a series of articles separately constructed from one interview extended over several days, granted by Cardinal Ratzinger to Italian journalist Vittorio Messori — has been put together for publication under thirteen chapter headings which suggest far more continuity and coherence than is actually achieved. The translation is hasty, awkward, and often very confusing. For these reasons it was difficult, as I read the document in galleys, to be sure about what appeared to be misprints distorting the meaning. Ratzinger, although he has now been in administrative positions for many years, was an accomplished scholar and, at one time, a collaborator with Karl Rahner. I cannot believe that some of the really foolish statements in this "report" actually came from him or represent his opinions accurately, though the general concerns are certainly his. The text of the "private document on liberation theology," which is given entirely in italics, does seem to be directly from his pen.

Vittorio Messori claims in the first chapter that the cardinal "reviewed" Messori's "articles as well as this book" and "has approved them by declaring that he recognizes himself in the texts," including the translation, "beginning with the German, which is normative." Now maybe others may conclude from that somewhat convoluted phrasing ("he recognizes himself in the texts") that we should equate the cardinal's true views with the highly artificial organization of this English translation. I retain some doubts.

The problem is doubly annoying because the topics covered are crucial, and misunderstandings could cause a good deal of damage to relations in the church which are already strained. The concerns covered are:

- the true interpretation of the Second Vatican Council, primarily with reference to the way the church and its structure and function are understood, and further with reference to priesthood, episcopate, and authority;
- the directions in contemporary Catholic theology and the influence these have had on catechesis;
- the structure, method, and content of moral theology;
- women, and Mary as a model;
- contemporary grassroots movements of spirituality;
- style and theology of the liturgy;
- devils, angels, and the "Last Things";
- and various reflections on the proclamation of the Gospel in our times. The impression is inescapable that on most of these topics the interviewer takes a more rigidly conservative, and of course less informed, position than does the cardinal himself. This factor, together with the incomplete and disjointed nature of the positions reported, suggests extreme caution in responding as though to the cardinal's statements.

Knowing Cardinal Ratzinger's earlier work, I could see here a consolidation of a theological synthesis which I deeply respect but deplore. The synthesis is built around a trinitarian theology which conserves the major dogmatic statements of the Tradition while maintaining coherence and subtlety in its interpretations. Ratzinger's synthesis, however, comes to a focus in an ecclesiology and soteriology which I find less coherent and far less subtle. He views church and salvation in such narrowly institutional, organizational terms that he fails to answer the burning questions arising out of contemporary human suffering. It seems to me that this is the task of theology: to appropriate in depth the ever-new questions about meaning in life, hope, and purpose as these questions arise within new experiences and cultures, and to bring them into confrontation with the divine self-revelation as received and expressed in the piety and struggles and wisdom of the generations that have gone before us in the great tradition of faith in Jesus Christ. I have the impression Cardinal Ratzinger would like a heavier emphasis on verbal orthodoxy (the faithful repetition of earlier formulations) and would require contemporary questions to be trimmed and retailored until they are the questions to which the traditional catechisms and theological manuals are the answers. I dare to suggest this only because I am drawing on a far wider knowledge of his writings and statements than could be garnered from this "report."

In relation to most of the issues here, the statements attributed to the cardinal only express concern, without indicating what his precise solutions might be, and I must confess I share the concern although I might argue for different solutions if his were actually spelled out. On some topics, notably liturgy and spirituality, the remarks seem to be a matter of plain common sense. On the topic of women the "report" is so incomplete and garbled it would be unfair to comment.

The one topic with which I would like to take issue in a more thorough way is the statement on liberation theology. The cardinal's remarks reveal significant misunderstandings, not least of which is a distorted sense of Marx's term "class struggle." Other misunderstandings include a failure to take into account the distinctions among various types of liberation,

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which these theologians themselves have made quite explicit, and a failure to distinguish among strands of Marxist thought and movements. To clarify these matters would require more time and space than is available here, but I believe the task is important because the "Instruction of the Congregation for the Faith Concerning Certain Aspects of Liberation Theology," which is reflected in Ratzinger's "private statement," appears to be the outcome of deliberate misinformation supplied to the Sacred Congregation for political reasons.

# GEORGE G. HIGGINS

## Knocking down straw men

*The neo-Modernists are ululating in agony over the contents of the book. The true believers, on the other hand, are ecstatic. It appears that the book is a sign of contradiction, designed to be the occasion for the rise and fall of many.*

Father Vincent P. Miceli
*from a review of* The Ratzinger Report *in* The Wanderer

THAT'S RATHER heavy stuff. According to Webster, to ululate means "to howl, as a dog or a wolf; to wail; also to hoot, as an owl." Maybe I have not been listening carefully enough, but I have yet to hear any of Cardinal Ratzinger's critics express themselves in one or the other of these three unseemly animal-like voices. Nor have I found a "neo-Modernist" among them — unless, of course, people who disagree with Father Miceli and the editors of *The Wanderer* fall by definition into that self-servingly ambiguous category.

In any event, Father Miceli is right on target when he says that the "true believers" (also a self-servingly ambiguous category) are ecstatic about *The Ratzinger Report*. They have already begun to tout the book aggressively for their own polemical purposes. *The Wanderer*, for example, is not only running advertisements of the book free of charge (with a quote from Miceli's review as the centerpiece of the ads) but is also offering copies to its subscribers at generous pre-publication discount rates. Why not? The cardinal's views, according to A. J. Matt, Jr., editor of the paper, "largely affirm the judgments expressed over the last twenty years by *The Wanderer* and other orthodox individuals and organizations" (the opposite of "orthodox" being, of course, "heretical"). I doubt that Cardinal Ratzinger will be deliriously and unqualifiedly happy about being so closely identified with the views expressed in *The Wanderer* since Vatican II. But who knows? In any case, the "true believers" are off and running and can sniff blood at the end of the trail.

It might be argued, of course, that all of the above is much ado about nothing, and that one ought to concentrate on the contents of the Ratzinger book and simply ignore what *The Wanderer* and company are doing with it for their own purposes. I disagree. It is highly significant — and a worrisome portent of stormy weather ahead — that the "true believers" are systematically striving to create the impression that Cardinal Ratzinger has, in effect, given his *imprimatur* to their almost apocalyptically negative point of view regarding the current state of Catholicism. It is clear that they have decided to use his book polemically as a quasi-official litmus test of the loyalty and orthodoxy of those who disagree with them, including, of course, any number of U.S. bishops whom *The Wanderer* has already found seriously wanting under both of these headings.

This is bad news, I think, especially for Cardinal Ratzinger. Both he and his book deserve better. Mr. Matt is correct when he says that the cardinal's report on the current state of Catholicism "cannot be dismissed" and that "the Catholic people, from bishops to laity, must honestly address the problems outlined by His Eminence." Agreed. But to address these problems "honestly" is easier said than done. As Nicholas Lash of Cambridge University has cautioned in a special Ratzinger issue of *New Blackfriars*, it calls for "much patience, courageous trust in the integrity of other people, the taking of great pains to ensure that we report as accurately as possible the views of those with whom we disagree."

With the exception of some of the more militant "true believers," reviewers of *The Ratzinger Report* are, by and large, doing their level best to meet these minimal canons of civil discourse. Of the dozen or so British, French, and U.S. reviews that I have seen thus far, not one has questioned the cardinal's motives or integrity, or misrepresented his point of view. A few prestigious commentators — notably, Cardinal Henri de Lubac, a distinguished theologian in his own right — have praised the book very highly. Others have challenged the author rather sharply on specific points and, in general, have argued that he is much too pessimistic about the state of Catholicism twenty years after Vatican II.

I share the latter point of view. I found the *Report* extremely dispiriting. From beginning to end it is distressingly grim and doleful and, despite occasional and fleeting references to flickering signs of progress and renewal, is oppressively negative. In short, I share the reaction of Fergus Kerr, O.P., editor of *New Blackfriars*, who has observed that the cardinal's "analysis is pervaded with images of entropy. It is as if the church had been infected by some degenerative malady, some morbid deterioration of the doctrinal tissue, with the fatal germs being carried by certain theologians right through the system."

I think that's a fair and accurate summary of the cardinal's overall point of view. (To be sure, the cardinal, as one might expect, frequently affirms his unshakable conviction that the Holy Spirit is unfailingly guiding the church at every stage of its pilgrimage and will keep it faithful to its mission until the

MSGR. GEORGE G. HIGGINS, *adjunct lecturer in theology at Catholic University and syndicated columnist in the Catholic press, was for many years director of the social action department for the U.S. bishops' conference in Washington.*



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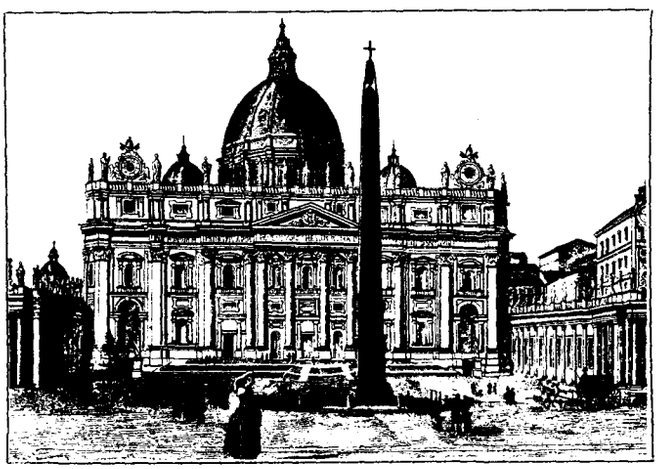
end of time.) The cardinal's interlocutor, Vittorio Messori, disagrees; he says it would be misleading to assess the book in optimist/pessimist terms. We may be dealing here with semantics. Certainly it is clear that by comparison with the preparatory documents submitted to the secretariat for the forthcoming synod by British, U.S., and other national hierarchies, the cardinal's assessment of the current state of Catholicism is decidedly pessimistic in the ordinary sense of that word.

Whatever of that, Messori is on shaky ground when he says that "no other personage in the church — apart from the pope, of course, — could answer our questions with greater authority" than Cardinal Ratzinger. I doubt that the cardinal would make such a sweeping claim on his own behalf. To the contrary, he would want it clearly understood, I think, that the theological opinions expressed in the *Report* are strictly his own and must be judged by his peers on their merits.

It is clear, moreover, that much of what the cardinal says in the *Report* falls under the heading, not of theology as such, but, rather, religious sociology. And it goes without saying that the cardinal's writ, whether as a ranking official of the Roman Curia or as an individual scholar, does not run to sociology. Even Father Joseph Fessio, S.J., director of Ignatius Press, U.S. publisher of the *Report*, readily concedes this point. Although Fessio thinks that the evidence of the last twenty years entirely supports the cardinal's judgment and "stands before our eyes like a naked emperor," he admits that it is beyond the cardinal's jurisdiction "to express an authoritative judgment on the *state* of faith or morals in the church. Such a judgment is one for which no divine guarantees have been given."

That needed saying, and one is grateful to Fessio for saying it — and grateful also to *The Wanderer* for printing it, albeit, as part of a crotchety editorial aimed at unmasking (with a generous assist from Fessio) the National Catholic News Service and "the modernist establishment it serves."

Under the heading of sociology, as distinct from theology, I would question the *Report* on two points in particular, merely by way of example: its negative treatment of episcopal conferences, and its one-sided assessment of North American culture as it allegedly influences the U.S. theological community.



The cardinal's treatment of episcopal conferences is both theological and sociological in nature. He says that episcopal conferences are not based on theological foundations, as is the office of individual bishops, but on practical, factual considerations. He also claims that episcopal conferences, as such, have no real teaching authority. These are questions on which I am not qualified to comment. The record will show, however, that competent theologians, including Father Avery Dulles, S.J., of The Catholic University of America, and Father John Mahoney, S.J., of Heythrop College, London, have already challenged Ratzinger on the issue of episcopal conferences, and convincingly so in the judgment of many of their peers. The cardinal will undoubtedly be challenged again on this subject during the forthcoming extraordinary synod of bishops. No doubt one or more of the synodal delegates will feel constrained to quote him against himself, reminding him that what he is now saying about the theology of episcopal conferences is exactly the opposite of what he said more than once in cold print both during and immediately after Vatican II.

Sociologically speaking, the cardinal takes an extremely dim view of episcopal conferences as they have developed in practice since the end of Vatican II. He says, among other things, that when the bishops come together in these conferences, they run the risk of having their distinctive teaching role stifled by the bureaucrats who staff these agencies. By that he means that the bishops are becoming too dependent on staff people who do their research for them and draft their official documents. He further contends that conference bureaucrats, in an effort to strike a balance between conflicting points of view, often tend to flatten or blunt the evangelical message which the bishops as teachers of the faith should be putting forth. In other words, the cardinal thinks that the bishops, instead of fearlessly exercising individual apostolic leadership in the church, are settling for a kind of group conformism.

I think the cardinal has got the episcopal conference issue almost completely wrong, at least in the case of our own National Conference of Catholic Bishops. He seems not to be very well informed on the working of NCCB. Moreover, he would be hard put, I think, to support his overall complaint in the case of other national episcopal conferences. I have no doubt that many if not most of the delegates to the forthcoming synod, speaking for their own national conferences, will, if given the opportunity, reject his complaint and will recommend that the authority of episcopal conferences be strengthened rather than weakened. There is every reason to think that Bishop James Malone, president of our own conference, will be among those taking the lead on this crucial issue.

The cardinal is extremely rough on his fellow theologians. In frequent flashes of what many will perceive as anti-intellectualism, he tends to contrast them indiscriminately and pejoratively with the "simple" faithful. The cardinal is particularly harsh in his treatment of liberation theologians and of U.S. theologians working in the field of moral theology. Since he never cites chapter and verse and never identifies his hapless targets by name, it is almost impossible to know exactly



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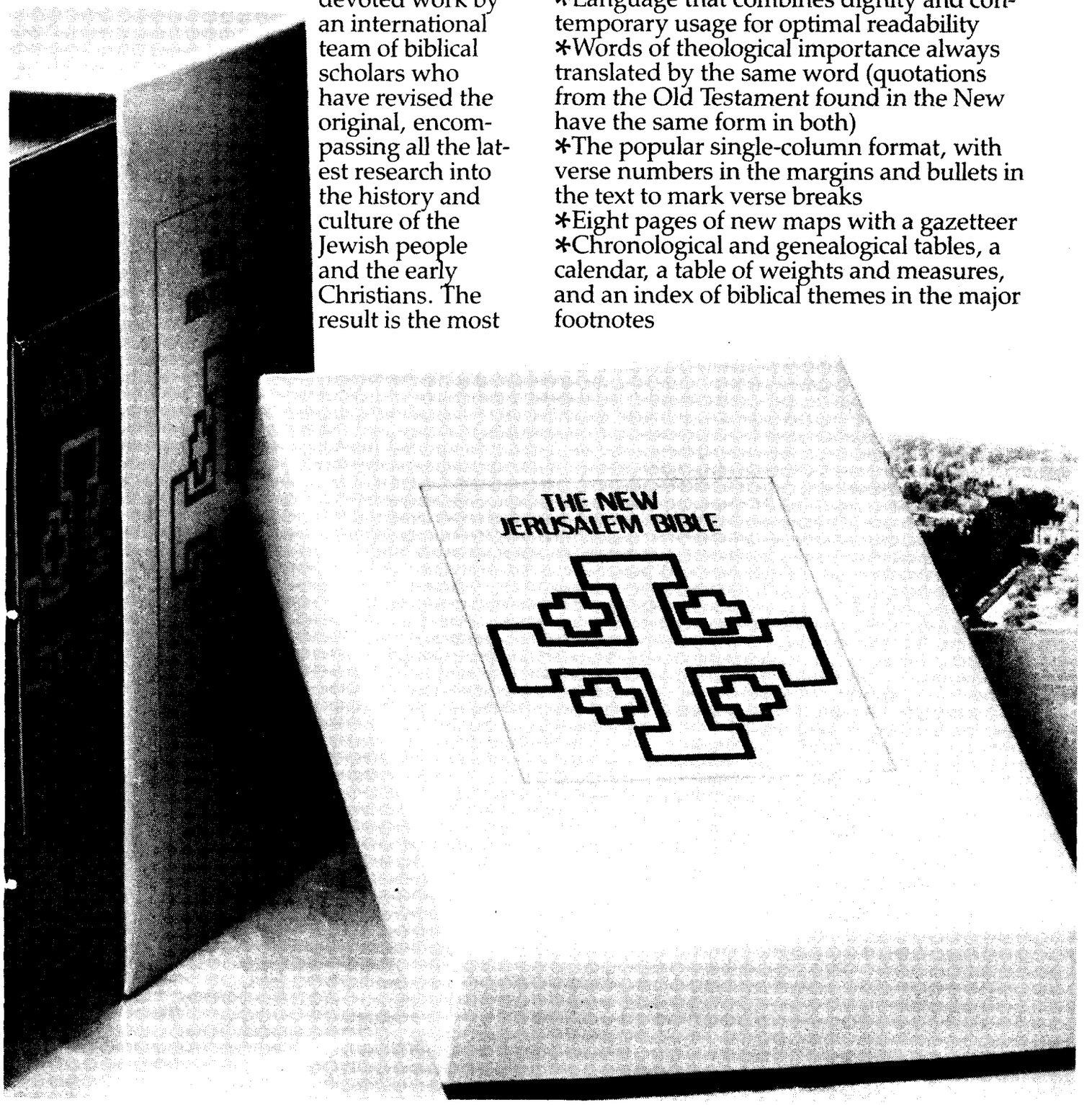


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what he is driving at here. To quote Nicholas Lash again, the cardinal's style "relies for effectiveness on dark but unspecific reference to 'tendencies' " and on "the accumulation of disapproving epithets." In any event, the theologians are fully capable of speaking for themselves, and undoubtedly will be doing so in print as time goes on. Most of them, I suspect, will conclude that he is knocking down straw men. For present purposes, I should like to differ with the cardinal on only one point — again, a sociological one.

The cardinal repeatedly charges that many theologians, particularly in the United States, have succumbed to the wiles of bourgeois materialism and, more specifically, to the wiles of economic liberalism, by which he means "a model of the free market [which] imposes its implacable laws on every aspect of life." Economic liberalism, he says, creates its exact counterpart, "permissiveness," on the moral plane; and theologians, especially U.S. theologians, have sold out to this liberal, free market ideology.

That's a curiously unhistorical or ahistorical line of argument. If the argument were valid, Western theologians in general, and U.S. theologians in particular, in the late nineteenth century or the early twentieth century, when economic liberalism was in its heyday, should have been the ones to sell out to the system, not the theologians of the 1980s when economic liberalism in the sense in which the cardinal is using the term, has been greatly attenuated and is even said to be fighting for its life. Fighting for its life against whom? In many cases, against the very theologians whom Ratzinger is attacking.

Needless to say, the cardinal's critique of Western bourgeois values is not completely without merit. On this and a number of related subjects he has pointed to problems which, to quote Mr. Matt again, "the Catholic people, from bishops to laity, must honestly address." Let us hope that we will all address them with civility. The cardinal has written a serious book which deserves to be taken seriously, but God forbid that it should be bandied about polemically as "a sign of contradiction, designed to be the occasion for the rise and fall of many." To repeat, both the cardinal and his book deserve better than that. So do we all.

## HAROLD WASHINGTON & THE POLITICS OF LEADERSHIP

# Anatomy of a stalemate

WILLIAM G. MAYER

IN ITS OUTLINE, the story is a simple one. At the end of a wild and bitter campaign in the spring of 1983, a sixty-year-old congressman named Harold Washington won legal title to the office of mayor of Chicago. In almost every other respect, the election settled nothing. It was only a bell that signaled the end of Round One. The coalition-building processes that are normally such an important part of a political campaign — in which a candidate is required to present a mixed and moderate platform appealing to a diverse cross section of the electorate — simply never occurred. By the time it was over, Harold Washington was hero to the Chicago black community, and anathema to most of its whites. And in the succeeding two years, the battle lines have only stiffened.

Since at least 1980, the race for City Hall had been seen as a showdown between incumbent Mayor Jane Byrne and Richard M. Daley, Cook County State's Attorney and eldest son of the man who had been Chicago's mayor for twenty-one years. But in the summer of 1982, Byrne's political manipulation of the Chicago Housing Authority led to a massive voter registration drive and a movement to draft a black candidate for mayor.

What needs to be emphasized, however, is the complex and multifaceted role that race played in these proceedings. Most black candidates in the United States have made a strong effort to downplay the racial base of their campaign: to portray themselves as the leaders of a coalition, and to insist that they are not "the black candidate," but a candidate who happens to be black. Harold Washington was a different story. From the very beginning, he consciously sought the title of "black candidate," and he wanted everyone to know it. Though they would later complain about the media's use of that phrase, Washington and his supporters had been using it repeatedly in the four months before he announced his candidacy, in public statements such as the following:

"(Jane Byrne) has made it necessary for the black community to get behind a strong black candidate for the sake of political survival. She has created a climate which gives a black candidate the strongest chance ever."

"There is no question that we are going to have a candidate for mayor from the black community."

"I am one of several viable black candidates, hopefully,

WILLIAM G. MAYER, *a Ph.D. candidate in government at Harvard, is a life-long resident of the Chicago area, and a free-lance writer on politics.*



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who are looking hard at the issue (of whether to run or not), and one of us will be in the arena."

Just in case anyone hadn't gotten the message, within a week after announcing his candidacy in mid-November 1982, Washington summed it up in the slogan: "It's our turn." To a nearly all-black audience in a South Side church, Washington declared: "Every group, when it reaches a certain population percentage, automatically takes over. They don't apologize. . . . They just take over. . . . And so now it's come to the point where we say, 'Well, it's our turn. It's our turn.' And we don't have to make any excuses for it. You don't even have to explain it."

To be sure, there was another side to the Washington campaign. His rhetoric, while calling black voters "the base," also included an invitation to Hispanics, women, and poor and progressive whites to join him. He also tried to attract a wider following by talking about issues of common concern such as schools, police, taxes, and jobs. But as in most campaigns, the details of Washington's policy statements were lost amidst the images and the hoopla. On February 23, 1983 with the white vote split almost exactly in half, Washington squeaked through to a narrow 36,000-vote victory. Exit polls showed that Washington had received over 80 percent of the black vote, but only 6 percent of the white vote, and 13 percent of the Hispanic vote.

The general election campaign only complicated Washington's problems. Having won almost no white support in the primary, he now made surprisingly little attempt to reach out beyond his narrow, core constituency. While many white committeemen openly told the press that they were waiting for his call or hoping that he would organize a unity meeting, Washington made no phone calls and organized nothing. Instead, he made a series of public statements that suggested that he didn't care, or that he was taking their support for granted.

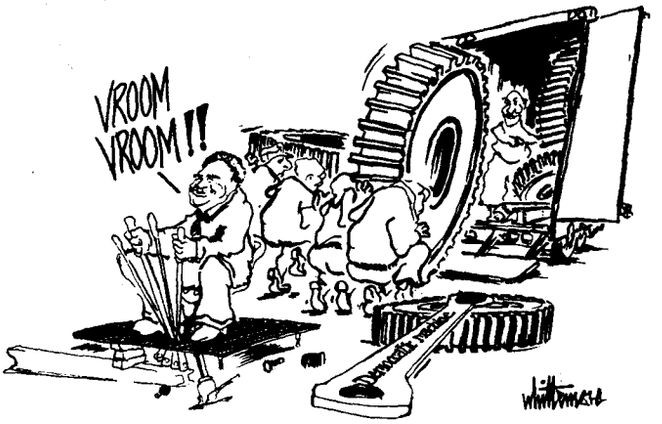
There is a striking contrast between Washington's behavior, and that of Wilson Goode, the first black mayor of Philadelphia, who was elected seven months later. Though Goode's victory in the Philadelphia Democratic primary was vastly more impressive — Goode won 53 percent versus Washington's 36 percent — on the day after the election, Goode called up the party leaders who had opposed him and asked for their support. As a result, Goode led a united Democratic party into the general election, and coasted to an easy victory notable for its lack of racial overtones.

BY MID-MARCH, Washington's brief opportunity was over, and the campaign slid straight into the mud. The early polls had shown Washington ahead of Republican Bernard Epton by twenty-eight points. By election day, April 12, that lead had dwindled to only 4 percent. Still, it was enough, and Washington was elected mayor by 48,000 votes. Again the exit polls told an important story: Washington had received 99 percent of the black vote, but only 19 percent of the white vote, and much of that in a handful of North Side liberal wards.

Washington claimed that the election results had given him a mandate to recast the shape of city government. But had he looked more closely at the composition of the new city council, whose members had also been elected in 1983, he might have had some second thoughts. They, too, had a mandate, and it was one very different from his. Of the fifty aldermen, elected from wards on a nonpartisan ballot, Washington had a natural base of twenty votes: sixteen blacks and four anti-machine whites. To get a working majority, he needed only six more votes — but he had to get them from notably unpromising raw material: twenty-nine whites and one Hispanic, almost all of them closely affiliated with the Regular Organization. Traditionally, Chicago mayors assemble their council majorities by dishing out jobs, favors, and contracts — but as a reform candidate, Washington had promised he wouldn't do that sort of thing. Nor could Washington gain votes as Ronald Reagan has for his programs, by holding over the heads of uncooperative congressmen the threat that voters would turn them out at the next election. The thirty aldermen knew full well that Washington had been clobbered in their wards, and that their constituents were more likely to be upset if they sided *with* Washington.

But race was not all that divided Washington from the council majority. Questions of power were also at stake. For the previous fifty years, most of the city's political power had been held by the officeholders of the Regular Democratic Organization; now here was Harold Washington, who was not just an outsider, but who was actively pledging to destroy it. Questions of race aside, most politicians are usually reluctant to support a candidate running on a promise to strip them of their power. As one alderman had said during the campaign, "Why would I give him the guillotine with which to chop off my head?"

In a (pre-Murdoch) editorial, the *Chicago Sun-Times* stated, "Race is not the issue; clout is. The Old Guard would have reacted just as strongly to a white mayor who threatened to reduce its power." This might be something of an exaggeration, but not much of one. A more accurate description is that the racial division had reinforced the dynamics of the power struggle, and made it easier for both sides to maintain a united front against the opposition. A number of black aldermen are not particularly fond of Harold Washington, and are privately critical of the way he has performed in office. Many white aldermen feel that the Organization has done very little to help



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them. In the absence of racial tensions, there would be numerous defections on both sides; and rather than having two solid factions, the council would probably be governed by a series of shifting coalitions that would form around different issues. (Who would wind up as the net beneficiary of the switching is difficult to say.) But as it is, both Washington and his opponents have used race to club the recalcitrants into line.

In short, there were all the ingredients for a major confrontation: a population sharply divided along both racial and ideological lines; a mayor closely identified with one side; and a city council elected primarily by the other side.

Enter now the ringleader: Edward R. Vrdolyak, alderman from the Tenth Ward. Though both men would probably resist the comparison, Vrdolyak's political career bears a number of striking similarities to Harold Washington's. Both men got their start in politics by working for the machine, and shot up the ranks by being smarter and tougher than the competition. Both have also had problems with the law: in Washington's case, a forty-day prison sentence for income tax evasion; in Vrdolyak's, a score of state and federal probes for questionable business dealings and campaign finance violations. Vrdolyak, like Washington, had no illusions about what was at stake in the '83 elections. Speaking before a group of white precinct captains several days before the primary, Vrdolyak called the election "a racial thing" between Byrne and Washington. "Don't kid yourself. I'm calling on you to save your city, to save your precinct. We're fighting to keep the city the way it was."

The showdown came at the very first city council meeting of the new administration, held on May 2, 1983. In a pattern that would become all too familiar in the months ahead, the Washington forces started out in a difficult situation — and then did everything possible to make matters worse. For weeks before that meeting, Washington's top aides had been telling the press how they intended to dump Vrdolyak and other top Organization aldermen from their committee posts — all the while having no firm strategy about how to acquire the twenty-six votes necessary to organize the council. Vrdolyak was a better vote counter. By working the phones through a couple of long days, Vrdolyak managed to come up with an organizational scheme that gave an important committee chairmanship to every one of the Regulars, and then got twenty-nine aldermen to sign their names to it.

So the mayor and the Chicago city council were at war with one another. In the last two years, Chicago has never moved beyond this basic stalemate. Chicago has traditionally been known as a city of strong mayors; but unfortunately for Washington, the power is concentrated almost entirely in patronage and the party structure. On paper, Chicago is usually classified as having a strong council/weak mayor form of government. Unfortunately for Vrdolyak, however, the mayor does have veto powers, and a two-thirds majority is necessary for an override. On most major issues, the mayor cannot act without the cooperation of the council, and vice versa.

Although Chicago's internal squabbles no longer make the national news, the lack of coverage does not mean that the rift has somehow been healed. Actually, the city has now settled into a cold war phase. Much like the United States and the Soviet Union, the hostile antagonists have recognized that total victory is, at least for the moment, impossible; and so they glare and snarl, and try to eke out some small advantage from each minor governmental or political squabble.

Politics has become more petty. Issues are scrutinized less for their substantive content, and more for the minor political advantages they provide to either side. In October 1983, for example, Washington vetoed a measure passed by the council, for the sole apparent reason that it would have built a new athletic field in Vrdolyak's home ward. To get even, in May 1984 Alderman Edward Burke, Vrdolyak's aide-de-camp, called attention to the fact that Washington had been three weeks late in filing a financial disclosure statement required by state law; Burke declared that Washington was no longer legally mayor, since the law stated that anyone who violated the deadline forfeited his office. Burke's lawsuit was dismissed, and Washington kept his job but was sorely embarrassed by the incident.

IT IS IMPORTANT, however, not to overstate Chicago's woes. Though few local commentators have made the comparison, the basic alignment of political forces in the city is no different from that which has confronted all of the last four Republican presdients who have been forced to work with a House (and until 1980. a Senate) organized by the Democrats. Indeed, in a city where the population is so sharply polarized, there may even be a certain wisdom in placing the legislative and executive powers in different hands, thus forcing the two sides to compromise before city government can act.

An area where the power-sharing arrangement has worked relatively well has been the enactment of the 1984 and 1985 city budgets. In the old days, Mayors Daley and Byrne had prepared the budget in secret, introduced it one day, and rammed it through the council a week later while a handful of independent aldermen scrambled madly to offer a few last-minute amendments. This process tended to limit the influence of special interests; it also, especially in the Byrne years, meant that the budget never received the kind of public scrutiny that might have prevented waste and financial gimmickry. Today, by contrast, the mayor and the city council each prepare their own budget, and then the two sides sit down and negotiate. It has come as a distinct shock to most Chicagoans that city budgets can actually be discussed and debated; judged by its product, the arrangement has worked quite well.

The city's record in economic development is a more woeful tale. Investors and managers, thinking about where to locate or expand a business, require minimal guarantees of stability. Instead, Chicago has offered them something resembling a three-ring circus. To make matters worse, city-sponsored economic development projects have emerged as the principal hostages in the council wars. In early 1984, for example, the Washington administration suddenly decided that the legal business connected with one development project would be taken away from a Vrdolyak-allied law firm, and given instead



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to a firm with close ties to Washington's Corporation Counsel. The council, not surprisingly, responded by killing the project. Political philosophers who have urged that government powers be divided and balanced have presumed that all sides were committed to a basic core of values, programs, and principles. In Chicago, whether such a commitment exists remains an open question.

That a large city with Chicago's diverse population should be divided along racial lines is neither surprising nor unprecedented. Most black mayors in the U.S. have had to struggle to gain the confidence of the white electorate; and where white voters are suspicious or hostile, white leaders will inevitably rise up to champion such views.

But two factors set Chicago's experience apart from that of other cities. The first is the strength and unity of the opposition. Vrdolyak and Burke, whatever their other failings, are undeniably vigorous and effective leaders; the existence of the machine (which is stronger than some reports suggest) has given them a structure and a tradition around which to build. They have insured that the opposition to Washington is not just a vague and formless discontent, but a coordinated and coherent political faction.

The second factor is more unexpected — and for many Chicagoans, more frustrating. In the 1983 general election, many civic leaders and both city newspapers endorsed Washington on the specific premise that he was a more experienced political leader who could better heal the city's divisions. Instead, he has proven to be a remarkably fumbling, clumsy, paralyzing politician. In countless incidents, he has invested his political resources poorly, and has needlessly alienated potential supporters. Undoubtedly there is racial prejudice in Chicago — but there is also prejudice in Los Angeles and Philadelphia and Birmingham, and the black mayors in those cities have coped with it much more effectively. As one of the strongest Washington supporters I know conceded to me, "Washington inherited a very difficult situation, and has made it a lot worse."

A variety of explanations have been put forward to account for Washington's political troubles. Some local columnists have attributed it to general administrative and organizational chaos. Good politics requires planning and follow-through, and on both counts Washington has fallen short.

Beyond faulty execution, however, there is a larger problem: since becoming mayor, Washington has tried to fill two political roles. He wants to be "mayor of all the people"; he also wants to be a recognized and explicit "black leader." But in the context of current Chicago politics — with whites anxiously scrutinizing his every move — such roles are largely incompatible.

The ambivalence persists. The mayor has pursued a heavy schedule of appearances at forums, ribbon-cuttings, and neighborhood festivals in the white areas of the city. But he has also continued to show signs of special commitment to black political empowerment. He has traveled all over the country campaigning for other black mayoral candidates; he has talked about leading a national drive to help register blacks in other cities; his inner circle of close advisors contains very few whites; in the presidential nomination race, he backed Jesse Jackson to the very end, and refused to respond to repeated overtures from the Mondale camp; and he has said he looked forward to the day when blacks would outnumber whites in the city electorate. No one would argue that such actions, considered in the abstract, are illegitimate or condemnable. The point is that they only exacerbate his basic political predicament. Washington has shown an almost obsessive concern with protecting his base — when his problem is a lack of allies *outside* the black community.

WHAT WASHINGTON'S record reminds us of, in short, is that the mayor's job is inescapably a political one; and that good politics is especially critical in a racially tense environment. White voters — in Chicago and elsewhere — are neither saints nor villains. They are ordinary, ambivalent human beings, coming to grips with changes they don't understand, struggling to reconcile some very good instincts with some very bad prejudices. Their suspicions cannot just be labeled "racist" and then dismissed, as though that solved the problem. Fears and anxieties need to be recognized and treated with sensitivity, just as Wilson Goode has done in Philadelphia, just as John Kennedy did with the religious issue in his campaign and presidency.

So where will it end?

The least likely resolution of the present stalemate is that the two sides will simply stop fighting and learn to get along better. As anyone in the Middle East or Northern Ireland can testify, ethnic and racial hostilities, once inflamed, take a very long time to cool.

Thus, the stalemate will continue; and the next two years will be pretty much like the last two. If they agree on nothing else, both sides have accepted that reality, and have set their sights instead on 1987, when both the mayor and the city council are up for re-election. At the moment, two big question marks surround that contest: how many opponents will Washington have? Who will they be? The answers would seem to be favorable to Washington. Given the mayor's solid base of support in the black community, a candidate hoping to beat him must win at least 90 percent of the white vote, and that appears increasingly unlikely. The city's white politicians will probably not be able to unite behind a single candidate; and the two persons most often mentioned — Vrdolyak and Byrne — both possess so many negatives that many whites would probably vote for Washington, his many mistakes notwithstanding.

But Washington also has a number of potential weaknesses. At the top of the list is the level of black political mobilization. Washington's victory in 1983 was due in large part to a spectacular increase in black voters: 200,000 blacks were added to the registration rolls, and black turnout levels, which had lagged 20 percent behind white turnout for the previous fifteen years, rose to a level of essential equality. Washington won 99 percent of the black vote in the 1983 general election, and it is extraordinarily unlikely that any white candidate will cut very far into that solid bloc support. It is very possible,



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however, to envision a scenario in which black turnout falls back to its previous levels, as blacks become disillusioned by Washington's failure to bring about any real changes in the conduct of city government.

As Washington contemplates the future, however, he might think about the experiences of two other cities. Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles was first elected in 1973, after a campaign in which racial issues were prominent and divisive. But in four years as mayor, Bradley managed to defuse the tensions and win the confidence of the white community. In doing so, he has rewritten the political culture of Los Angeles. He was easily re-elected in 1977, 1981, and 1985, and in 1982, he came within an eyelash of being elected governor. Today, there is no area in the country where black candidates run so well among white voters as in the city of Los Angeles.

Washington might also reflect on the experiences of Cleveland under Mayor Carl Stokes. Stokes's victory in 1967 was widely heralded as the beginning of a new era. But in retrospect, that election marks not the beginning, but the end of black politics in Cleveland. In four years in office (he was re-elected in 1969), Stokes never succeeded in gaining much white support, nor did he deliver on many of his promises to the black community. The result is that, since 1971, Cleveland has had three different mayors, all of them white.

For Harold Washington in Chicago, the opportunities are clear, but so, increasingly, are the danger signs.

## Screen

# FOUR DIMENSIONS

### MORE IMAGES OF WOMEN

FALL MOVIES continue to feature strong roles for women. The least successful is *Jagged Edge*, despite the fact that it features a woman in a traditional, powerful, male role: the criminal lawyer. Glenn Close (the earth mother figure in *The Big Chill*, the prairie sweetheart in *The Natural*) here tries to expand her repertoire of "nice" roles with some Perry Mason-type toughness; in the film's courtroom sequences, she displays a cool interrogatory style, calmly cutting through false testimony and conveying aplomb despite startling setbacks. She handles the defense in a grisly murder case as the hardy professional she's supposed to be. The only false notes are her lawyerly dresses, several sizes too small; such is feminism Hollywood-style.

Unfortunately, Close's performance is undone by an implausible plot. She's defending a San Francisco editor (Jeff Bridges) accused of brutally murdering his wife. The editor claims he's the scapegoat of a conviction-hungry prosecutor (Peter Coyote), whom he has criticized in his columns. Close is suspicious of both men, having worked for Coyote on a case in which she knows evidence was doctored; she also declares


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that she intends to drop Bridges if she discovers he's guilty. With such complications — and ethical rigor — what *Jagged Edge* didn't need was the predictable romance that, alas, destroys the credibility of Close's character.

One final note: the initial murder is particularly shocking. Director Richard Marquand *(Eye of the Needle)* is adept at thrillers, and has the right artistic instinct to place the killing first in the film. But its gruesomeness deserves condemnation, if not censorship. In its treatment of women, *Jagged Edge* is meanly deceitful, superficially upscale. It's enough to make you want to sign a petition to limit or outlaw distribution of films depicting sexual violence.

*HAIL MARY (Je Vous Salue Marie)* — Jean-Luc Godard's version of the life of Christ's mother — has raised different issues of censorship, particularly in the Catholic community. Pope John Paul II asked that it be withdrawn from a festival in Rome; several American distributors reneged on commitments to place the film because of protests by the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. In truth, however, the film's bark is worse than its bite. Indeed, there is actually some genuine religious feeling in the movie — albeit ruined by Godard's knee-jerk desire to shock.

Godard's first decision — to modernize the story — is questionable in itself; Pasolini made *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* without resorting to the kind of gas station setting (with Joseph as a taxi driver) that Godard employs. Nevertheless, his Marie (Myriam Roussel), the daughter of the gas station owner, has a tenderness and passion about her that sometimes suggest real spiritual feeling. Stunned by her inexplicable pregnancy, she asks her doctor, "Does the soul have a body?" earning the retort, "You mean, does the body have a soul?" But she and Godard meant their first question and the silence that follows to suggest some of the mystery of the Incarnation. Not unjustly, the film was awarded a prize at the Berlin Festival by the International Catholic Cinema Office.

Godard also tries to express diffuse religious feeling through landscape images and "Franciscan" suggestions; he fills his shots with cats and dogs that serve no obvious function except as a weird hymn to nature. The images are mostly clichés. Moreover, his excessive use of nudity, the inchoate rages of Marie, and the gratuitous obscenity of the script seem less Franciscan than modern-French, particularly derivative of Artaud's *théâtre de cruauté* and the long-standing commitment of French freethinkers to *épater le bourgeois*.

At a press conference after the screening at the New York Film Festival, Godard stated that he could not understand the fuss made over the film, which he claimed was less a story than a set of "images." "Images" are innocent, he said; "something so peaceful can't do any harm." Yet later Godard told the ironic story of how Freud, after fleeing Europe before World War II, was classified in England as an "enemy alien." "That is my concept of the artist," Godard said savoring the phrase, "an enemy alien." I was tempted to ask him to square his notions of innocence and enmity, until I recalled the self-serving ideologies with which many modern artists protect themselves from responsibility. In *Hail Mary*, Godard lets his ideology — especially his urge to insult, and his Pavlovian iconoclasm — interfere with his art, perhaps even with his heart.

*SWEET DREAMS*, a mediocre film, is worth seeing because of Jessica Lange. She plays Patsy Cline, a famous country music singer of the late fifties and early sixties, a forerunner of the more well-known Loretta Lynn. But Cline's story pales beside Lynn's in *Coal Miner's Daughter* (1981) — perhaps the finest Country Western film in recent years. *Sweet Dreams* has little of *Coal Miner's Daughter*'s cinematic poetry and evocation of antique, almost ancient, mountain culture. Worse, *Sweet Dreams*'s plot degenerates into a repetitious cycle of Cline's musical success and marital battles with her hard-drinking brute of a husband (Ed Harris), who both reveres and resents her. Narratively, there is no exit from their fights except through the *deus ex machina* at the close of the film.

Nevertheless, Harris and Lange team up to make the story of their mutual desires for success (their "sweet dreams") into something interesting. Lange pours herself into her role; for it, she gained twenty pounds and dares to prance around unashamed in a collection of magnificently tawdry cowboy costumes. She's learned her West Virginian dialect well enough to cuss in high style. She's also learned how to lip-synch so well that one can hardly tell that it's actually Patsy Cline's voice we are hearing on the movie soundtrack. Though often ribald, Lange translates an innocent force into Cline, with assorted growls, yelps, and down-home hyperbole, and exudes earnest, simple, heartfelt desire. She's also unafraid to take chances. Her best scene involves taking off some bandages from wounds suffered in an auto crash. She lets the camera devour her face, though the scars in her forehead resemble the stitches of the bride of Frankenstein. "So this is what I've got to deal with," she seethes, then resolutely leaves the hospital.

*ELENI* just misses greatness because the story of its heroine is mishandled. The film is based on the book of the same title by *New York Times* reporter Nicholas Gage (his original name is Gatzoyiannis): an account of how he, as Athens bureau chief, attempted to find out who killed his mother in the Greek Civil War. The film faithfully follows the book (Gage was one of the co-producers), suspensefully alternating between his search in the mid-seventies for private justice, and a re-creation of the turbulent politics of post-World War II Greece, when Communist guerrillas invaded the country's mountainous northern regions and attempted to establish a "people's democracy." Gage, then a young boy, escaped with his sisters; his mother remained to pay the price for their freedom. The depiction of the older Gage uncovering the truth about socialist terror, one of *Eleni's* best moments, recalls last year's masterpiece, *The Killing Fields*. Unfortunately, *Eleni* never quite matches its searing quality.



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The problem is not the acting. John Malkovich (the photographer in *The Killing Fields*, and the blind man in *Places in the Heart*), as Gage, perfectly catches by understated obsession his character's admitted thirst for vengeance. As his mother Eleni, Kate Nelligan is a pillar of strength for her abused family, convincingly portraying the rage and pain of a parent who, for example, has to cripple one of her daughters to save her from serving in the militia. The early parts of *Eleni* — splicing between scenes depicting Malkovich's lust to kill and Nelligan's earnest struggle to survive — promise a middle and end of cathartic intensity.

But *Eleni* only half-delivers. Malkovich's part of the story has two advantages: understatement and suspense. Little is said about what he intends to do when he finds his prey, but a frequently seen hand-gun raises some obvious possibilities. On the other hand, we know from the beginning that Eleni is dead, a fact which it would have been better for director Peter Yates somehow to disguise. Moreover, Yates makes Nelligan into a spokeswoman against totalitarian abuse of the family — a worthy cause, but a cinematic albatross. A heavy musical score and too many shots of Eleni wistfully saying goodbye to her children or walking among prisoners overstates obvious emotions and iniquities. Nelligan is a great actress, but the defects in *Eleni* prevent her from shining fully.

These weaknesses become evident halfway through the film, a point at which Malkovich is seen with decreasing frequency. Nevertheless, he returns in the climax, having finally located the revolutionary judge who tortured Eleni and ordered her executed. The confrontation — in a modern, comfortably middle-class Athenian household complete with kind women, grandchildren, and gracious hospitality — is well worth the wait.

Director Yates restores subtlety with a touch of genius: the moment when the one-time killer unknowingly offers his would-be killer some fine Greek bread — "like you can't get in America," he says with an old man's pride. The scene recalls how, as a young man, he taunted Eleni and her children, including Nicholas, with the sight of giant loaves of bread, promising it if they would only agree to migrate to Czechoslovakia. Malkovich's face quietly registers the irony. Then he does his mother justice. This climax provides the best single scene in a movie this year. TOM O'BRIEN

# Books: 'HAMLET' WITHOUT THE PRINCE?

**A CERTAIN PEOPLE**
AMERICAN JEWS AND THEIR LIVES TODAY
**Charles E. Silberman**
**Summit, $19.95, 458 pp.**

**ISRAEL IN AMERICA**
A TOO-COMFORTABLE EXILE?
**Jacob Neusner**
**Beacon, $14.95, 203 pp.**

**Michael Wyschogrod**

THERE is widespread agreement that the survival of the Jewish people over two millennia requires a bit of explanation. Jews themselves are not so much impressed by survival in the past as they are worried whether they can continue pulling off this trick in the future. It was one thing surviving in an environment generally not friendly to Jews. But can this be repeated in an almost totally accepting America where absorption into the mainstream culture is available to the Jew for the asking? From the Israeli vantage point, indefinite survival of the diaspora under conditions of flourishing religious and cultural creativity would raise serious questions about some basic Zionist assumptions. Isn't a full Jewish life possible only in Israel? Battered by intermarriage and assimilation, isn't the diaspora doomed to extinction? Both of the books under discussion answer this question, particularly with respect to the American Jewish community, with a resounding no.

Silberman's study is the result of years of research on a scale not familiar to the American Jewish community. His earlier books, *Crisis in the Classroom, Crisis in Black and White,* and *Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice,* dealt with major problems afflicting the American body politic. In those books, Silberman surveyed the social science literature on the subject, added a good dose of investigative journalism, and came up with well-informed discussions of the problems in question. His success was a function of the mesh between his technique and the problems he tackled. The social sciences and investigative journalism deal well with social problems. But religion is only partly a social phenomenon.

Everywhere he looks, Silberman finds good news for Jews. Anti-Semitism is no longer a significant factor in American life. Nevertheless, Silberman concedes:

> Given the long history of anti-Semitism, as well as Jews' continued experience of it on the personal level, it would be feckless to argue that "it can't happen here." The relevant question, however, is not can it but *will* it happen here, and the answer to that is a resounding no, barring changes so massive that American democracy itself is threatened.

This is almost tautologous. Certainly, massive persecution of Jews cannot happen as long as American democracy is healthy. But what danger is there that American democracy can be threatened?

Silberman reports that Jews have made it big in the universities, the professions, and even in the biggest corporations (a whole chapter is devoted to celebrating the elevation in 1973 of Irving S. Shapiro to chairman and chief executive officer of E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Co., "that bluest of blue chip corporations"). Predictions of a significant shrinkage of the Jewish population in the U.S. due to a



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markedly low birth rate are also wrong. It seems unlikely that intermarriage will lead to more than a slight reduction in the number of Jews, and it could very well bring about an increase.

Is everything just fine, then? "Except for those who live in [Brooklyn's] Boro Park and its counterparts elsewhere," writes Silberman, "relatively few American Jews still believe in a God who makes demands on them; even fewer regard those demands as binding." A simple, believing Jew might consider such a state of affairs a catastrophe, however well Jews were doing in other respects. But Silberman finds no cause for alarm. "In the traditional view," he writes, contrasting it with the teaching of Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism:

> Judaism is primary: the Jewish people exists — indeed, was called into being — to serve its religion — to carry out God's will. In what he called a "Copernican revolution in his understanding of Judaism." Kaplan argued that, in reality, the relationship ran the other way. To Kaplan, peoplehood was primary; since Judaism was the creation — the religious civilization — of the Jewish people and not the Jewish people for the Jewish religion.

Though Silberman refers to this view as "Mordecai Kaplan's once controversial notion of the centrality of Jewish peoplehood," it remains as controversial as ever. Many Jews, and not only Orthodox Jews, continue to believe that a Judaism without "a God who makes demands on them" is playing *Hamlet* without the prince. If it is the Jewish people who created God, then it is also the same Jewish people who created the golden calf. Being created by the Jewish people is precisely the circumstance that made the golden calf not worthy of worship, whereas the God of Israel is worthy of worship precisely because he was not created by the Jewish people.

Silberman's book has merit as long as it stays on the descriptive, sociological level, though even here its unshakable optimism is not fully justified. It is to be regretted that the mass of empirical material in it (including some very good Jewish jokes) is not accompanied by a sounder theology.

Neusner's book consists of essays the author published in various journals during the last fifteen years. Like Silberman, Neusner insists that "a valid Jewish way of life, an authentic and enduring Judaic religious expression" can and does exist in the U.S. Nevertheless, he understands the religious centrality of Israel as a people set apart. "While Jews do not confuse the decisions of the Israeli parliament," he writes, "with the will of God, nearly all understand the state to be something like that 'diminished sanctity' of which Ezekiel spoke in the aftermath of the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C. . . . None perceives the state as merely of this world, convenient for relocating the remnants of European Jewry and the Jewish refugees from Arab states." Neusner thus demonstrates that a vigorous defense of the religious viability of American Judaism can be combined with a deep appreciation of the religious role of the state of Israel.

# For the bird's-eye view

**INDIA**

LABYRINTHS IN THE LOTUS LAND

**Sasthi Brata**
**Morrow, $19.95, 336 pp.**

**Una Chaudhuri**

IN a speech welcoming India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to the States this summer, President Reagan remarked that this has been "the year of India." To be sure, the surge of interest in India had causes other than those commemorated by the Festival of India that Mr. Gandhi was here to inaugurate. Not art and culture but political assassination and chemical holocaust had catapulted the subcontinent to its current fame. But television series like *The Far Pavilions* and *The Jewel in the Crown* and films like *A Passage to India*, with their misplaced romanticism (not to mention *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* and *Octopussy*, with their none-too-subtle racism), furnished just the right amount of sentimentalism to make all the sensationalism palatable to mass America. Briefly, India was "in."

This is the age of "tie-in" books (that is, of opportunistic publishing), and an India book was inevitably in the offing. One hoped that it would be a thoughtful and responsible book, an antidote to the media's caricature of India. Unfortunately, this book by Sasthi Brata is a tie-in book par excellence: a superficial and cliché-ridden introduction to India's "myriad aspects," deeply flawed in both conception and execution.

Intended to remedy "the absence of one single source to which the Westerner can turn for a bird's-eye view of the whole of India," the book incurs all the liabilities of such a view. The gain in breadth is no compensation for the loss in depth and detail. The book is elaborately organized — six parts further subdivided into sixteen chapters, which, in spite of their fanciful titles, are little more than brief, encyclopedia-style entries on Indian religions, rituals, art, literature, tourism, caste, bureaucracy, royalty, technology, politics, foreign relations, journalism, movies, and fashions.

The nature of the information offered on these subjects seems determined by considerations of readership rather than by the author's own interests or ideas (to which the book offers no clue). The book's intended reader is "the Westerner," sometimes called "the Western observer," though he is evidently free of even the barest familiarity with a subject that such an epithet normally suggests (the reader needs to be informed, for instance, that Hindus don't eat beef). Rather, he is imagined to be in a perpetual state of shock, surprise, bewilderment, or incomprehension from which the author seeks to rescue him by providing him with an armor of stereotypes with which to protect himself from the complexity of the phenomenon before him.

Though the reader is so painstakingly apprised of all of India's "myriad aspects," one senses that the author knows



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him to be less preoccupied with the message of the Vedas than with the prospects for comfortable tourism. (Evidently, as the acknowledgments suggest, the Indian government and various Indian hotel chains sensed this too and came through with a good deal of material help to the author for this project.) This concern for the reader and his point of view is the only explanation I can find for as astonishing a passage as the following one, which appears, inexplicably, at the end of a discussion of recent political history: "*But things do change, and sometimes for the better*. The Western tourist has much less trouble making himself understood. The hotels provide boiled water, the food can be as unspicy as any fastidious stomach might want, but also as exotic as any adventurous palate might seek" (my italics).

Perhaps identification with a Eurocentric consciousness can also explain Brata's offensive remark that the traditional Bengali bridegroom wears "an outfit that makes him look like a cross between a clown and a surrogate princeling" or his characterization of Sanskrit wedding prayers as "a huge host [sic] of mumbo jumbo." But when, totally ignoring the centrality of Tagore's work in contemporary Bengali culture, he asserts that the poet lives "in some obscure way," just because Tagore has not been adequately translated *into English*, one begins to wonder if the "orientalism" here is not Brata's own (just as no intended reader can be blamed for the sexism of a remark like "She had been a widow for over a decade, but a nascent *joie de vivre* still lingered on her face!").

Of course racism and sexism can be tolerated if one is compensated (one thinks of V. S. Naipaul) by originality of insight and richness of detail. But Mr. Brata's writing — including his attempts to enliven his subject with anecdotes and personal reminiscences — is of an unrelieved ordinariness. His analyses and descriptions have all the memorability of Delhi cocktail chatter, and his characters all seem to be cut out of a single sheet of soggy cardboard.

Part of the problem is that Mr. Brata's "Westerner" is so pressed for time, necessitating a strangely "democratic" coverage of the subject: one item, one paragraph — no matter how complex or how trivial the item at hand. The results are often amusing, more often maddening. It is amusing, for instance, when the view that E. M. Forster was "both a bad writer and intensely illiberal to boot" is supported only by an item from Forster's biography — that he had once "employed a shotgun artist to kill a dog who had become too fond of his homosexual friend!" It is maddening when subjects as complex and enigmatic as the origins of the caste system are dismissed with the comment that there are "millions of theories" about them, or when the author states that "residual impulses" of a practice like *jauhar* (the women of a group defeated in battle committing suicide to escape capture) "still remain," but furnishes no examples.

A single chapter, the one on Calcutta, shows that Mr. Brata can write well when the subject is one he personally knows and cares about. Unfortunately, the bulk of *India: Labyrinths in the Lotus Land*


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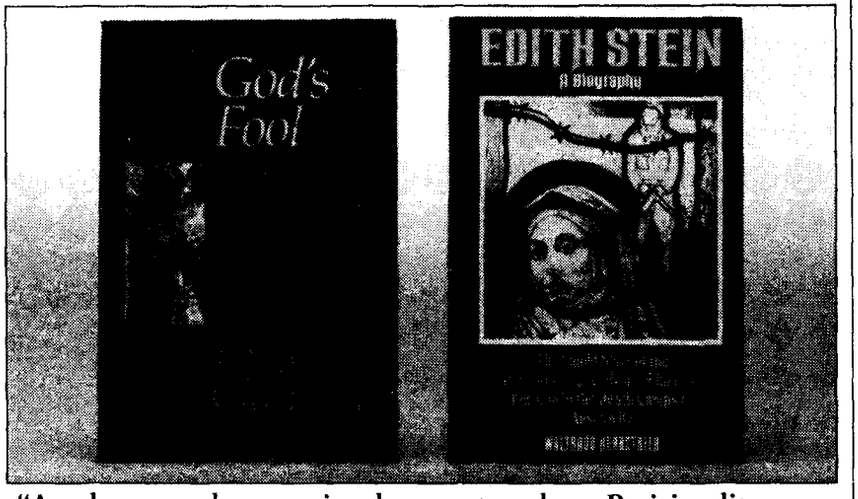


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seems devoid of any genuine desire or urge to share personal experiences and insights. Rather, a sort of glorified guide-book is produced, which, though it is certainly packed with information, offers precious little guidance to anyone who might be *genuinely* interested in its fascinating subject.

# A woman of flesh & blood

**TERESA**
A WOMAN
**Victoria Lincoln**
**State University of New York, $39.50, 425 pp.**

**Tessa Bielecki**

VICTORIA LINCOLN who died in 1981, spent the last twelve years of her life studying Teresa of Avila. Lincoln began her biography with noble intentions: "to avoid pious hagiography while narrating the life of a woman of flesh and blood." She partially achieves this goal. But as Professor Elias Rivers, who edited Lincoln's uncorrected manuscript, admits, the biography at hand, though it may be lauded as an "intuitive reconstruction" of Teresa's life is "less a work of scholarship than a novel-like story." We need to keep this in mind. It is hard to cross-check references, since the author paraphrases most quotations and documents few of her sources — a technique appropriate for a novel but not for authentic biography. It is too easy for Lincoln to put words into Teresa's mouth and twist them for her own purposes. Under the guise of scholarship, she presents mere speculation, personal opinion, and unfounded conjecture, evidenced in her repeated use of "It seems," "Let me suggest," "One can imagine," "At my own guess," "I suspect," and "I suppose."

Lincoln is preoccupied with what she calls Teresa's lies — supposedly told to protect her family, her friends, and her reform. "Now she comes to her other childhood love and has to tell one lie." Teresa says: "I had one brother almost my age." Lincoln responds: "Rodrigo was not seven-years-old but twelve; but the truth would have raised questions about that dear dreamer who preferred the company of an imaginative little girl to that of boys his age." Lincoln doesn't seem to find seven and twelve close in age, whereas Teresa did — in all innocence!

Teresa tells us more about her life than most saints, yet Lincoln insinuates a lack of honesty and integrity in her for withholding information about her Jewish ancestry, her sexual experience, etc. Our narcissistic culture is obsessed with "true confessions" and "letting it all hang out." This was impossible for Teresa because both her culture and her personality were characterized by discretion and dignity. There is a lesson here for our contemporary talk-show society.

In her eagerness to present Teresa as a woman of flesh and blood, Lincoln writes without spiritual sensitivity and mystical intuition and presents Teresa as *merely* human. This can be helpful, but here it is only a liability, for Teresa can only be properly understood as a woman *mystic*. Although Lincoln does well to explore the psycho-physical dimensions of mystical experience, she reduces mysticism to psychological conflict and psychological conflict to sexual conflict.

She is obsessed with Teresa's sexual life, claiming that the saint lost her virginity as a teenager and fornicated until she was forty. Teresa is no less saintly if these conclusions are correct, but there is inadequate evidence for either of them, despite Teresa's talk of her damaged reputation.

Yes, throughout her lifetime Teresa was very involved with men who were captivated by her irresistible combination of eros and holiness. But every time she refers to "sins," "occasions," or "worldly pastimes," Lincoln reads "sex." Teresa's biggest sin may well have been only foolish prattle (even titillating conversation) in the parlor. A conscience as delicate and a soul as flamboyant as hers, called to the heights of divine intimacy, was likely to see this as whoring in the biblical sense. In the spirit of the Old Testament, Teresa understood even the slightest infidelity to her Divine Bridegroom in sexual terms. Lincoln does not seem to understand that the personalities of saints like Teresa are extravagant. Their strong passions, extraordinary humility, and sensitivity of conscience sometimes led them to exaggerate their past sinfulness.

Although Lincoln examines Teresa's relationships with men more openly and thoroughly than any other author, she does not go far enough and misses the essential incarnational connection between Teresa's love for earthly men and her Heavenly Bridegroom. She seems to criticize Teresa for being "love-prone" when in fact this very quality greatly contributed to her sanctification.

In the debunking spirit of so many recent biographies of the saints, Lincoln tries to demonstrate Teresa's disobedience, falsely equating obedience with obeisance. True lines of obedience were tremendously obscured during Teresa's Carmelite Reform. There were briefs and counterbriefs from Rome, alternating accolades and condemnations from the papal nuncio, the king, the royal council, Carmelite superiors and various bishops. With holy daring, Teresa appealed time and again to a higher authority. She was

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always heroically obedient and a loyal "daughter of the church." Those unfamiliar with the complexities and intrigues of the Reform may find Lincoln's account cumbersome and confusing.

It is amusing that Lincoln, so preoccupied with Teresa's sexuality, has her die of throat cancer when other sources say death was due to cancer of the womb. No wonder Professor Rivers confesses Lincoln's "residual obscurities and even inaccuracies" and cites the need for scholars who will "later sift and refine" her "discoveries and intuitions."

Lincoln's work gives a good portrait of the more problematic aspects of Teresa's life: illnesses, family troubles, the infidelities of friends and fellow religious, the lurid rumors of her exploits with numerous confessors, the petty jealousies, betrayals, and scandals. She pays too little attention to the lighter and equally essential aspects of La Madre's life: her love of nature, her dancing with tambourine and castanets, her playfulness and ebullience — the ingenuity and creativity she used to transfigure her sufferings. But this leads to the realm of prayer and mysticism, where Lincoln is especially weak. *Teresa: A Woman* would have made a better novel than pseudo-biography. It may be profitable reading for serious students of St. Teresa, but misleading and irrelevant for a wider audience.

## Correspondence

*(Continued from page 626)*

theologians.

The most widely used translation of *The Documents of Vatican II* by Abbott-Gallagher (America Press, 1966) not only omitted a key phrase, but substituted something else, as noted by Msgr. Eugene Kevane in *Creed and Catechetics* (footnote, pages 60 and 279).

The critical point made by Pope John XXIII should have read as follows:

> . . . It is necessary that this certain and unchangeable doctrine, to which the obedience of faith must be given, be studied thoroughly and explained in the way for which our times are calling. For the de-


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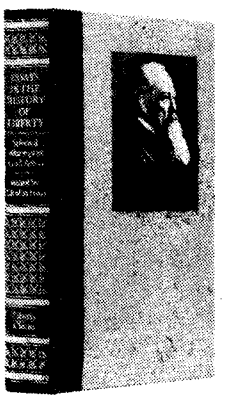

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posit of Faith in itself, namely the truths which form the content of our venerable doctrine, is one thing, and the way in which it is expressed is another thing, but nevertheless with the same meaning and sense." The Latin original for the last critical phrase is *eodem tamen sensu eademque sententia*.

According to Msgr. Kevane, the latter phrase "binds the mind of the supreme pontiff to the dogmatic definition of Vatican I and the Rule of Faith of the early church." He goes on to say,

> In his very act of opening Vatican II and giving it its orientation, (this key phrase) is simply omitted. Abbott-Gallagher fails to translate the adjectives *certa et immutabilis* (certain and unchangeable), referring to the doctrine; the (Abbott-Gallagher) says this doctrine is to be "studied and expounded through the literary forms of modern thought," concepts not to be found in the original Latin spoken by Pope John XXIII when he opened Vatican II.
>
> When one pauses to consider how many English-speaking Catholics, especially those in the United States, have imbibed this fictitious "spirit of Vatican II," from what an only be called unscholarly falsification at such key points, the immense measure of the harm already done comes home.

In 1973, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith went back to this same key sentence when trying to point out the proper way to explain doctrine. (*Mysterium Ecclesiae*.)

The classic example of the problem was the *Dutch Catechism*, a magnificent literary presentation of the faith, but flawed in the doctrines of creation, original sin, the satisfaction offered by Jesus to the Father, the Virgin Birth, the Eucharist, the priesthood, miracles, etc. Father Komonchak seems to underplay the doctrinal problems of the *Dutch Catechism*.

New expressions of the faith must be compatible with traditional affirmations of the Deposit of Faith and statements of the magisterium.

LAWRENCE H. GRADY

## The author replies:

Mr. Grady is correct in noting the disparity between the Latin text read by Pope John and the English translation given in the Abbott-Gallagher edition; but if there is a "falsification" here, as he, following Msgr. Kevane, suggests, the blame for it must be traced to another source than the one he implies.

The Abbott-Gallagher version is a quite accurate translation of the Italian original which the pope himself wrote. What the pope read at the council was a translation made by Vatican Latinists. It is the latter who are responsible for additions and omissions.

It is a fault in Abbott-Gallagher that they did not indicate which text they were translating. But before Mr. Grady and Msgr. Kevane see a conspiracy in the choice of the Italian original, they might note: (1) that Pope John told his secretary, "I would like the first Italian draft of this speech to be published also, not because I want to be praised for it but because I want to take responsibility for it; it should be known that it belongs to me from the first to the last word" (Hebblethwaite, *Pope John XXIII*, p. 430); (2) that both *Osservatore Romano* and *Civiltà Cattolica* published the pope's original draft and not a fresh Italian translation of the altered Latin text; (3) that when the pope later referred back to this text, he quoted the original Italian; (4) that the Abbott-Gallagher text is the English version which the Vatican itself distributed.

The differences between the two texts, then, are not evidence of an "unscholarly falsification" by some conspiracy of people appealing to a "fictitious 'spirit of Vatican II,' " as Msgr. Kevane suggests, but simple fidelity to the text which the pope himself composed. Rather than look for a conspiracy here (Hebblethwaite sees one in the Latin translators who, he says, "tampered with and censored" the pope's text!), it might be more fruitful for theologians to discuss which version should have authority, the personal thoughts of the pope himself or the "official" but altered Latin version of his translators. But this is too large a question to engage here.

Reading over the single sentence I devoted to it, I fail to see how I "underplay the doctrinal problems of the *Dutch Catechism*."

JOSEPH A. KOMONCHAK


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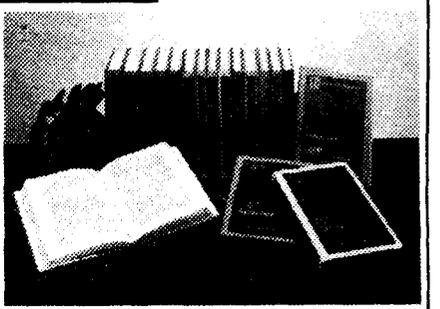

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